TESTS: Honda VF1000R, Suzuki Intruder, Yamaha TY350

CYCLE GUIDE

- Honda VF1000R?
- Kawasaki 900 Ninja?
- Suzuki GS1150E?
- Yamaha FJ1100?
- Yamaha V-MAX?

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FINAL WEEKS

WORLD FAMOUS GHIBLI HELMET

IN FINAL WEEKS OF GIANT PUBLICITY DRIVE. FEW HELMETS LEFT AT $69.

THIS IS NOT *A MISPRINT*

Response to helmet promotion has been phenomenal and only a fraction of the promotional inventory is left (less than 5,000 pieces). These helmets will remain in inventory until sold, on a first come - first served basis. All helmets are first quality and come with a full one year warranty.

All who wish to apply for a GHIBLI HELMET should write to the company address below before Midnight, September 30, 1985

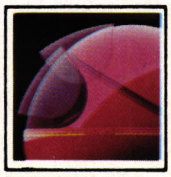
Special Note: The previous promotion of this helmet was a complete sell out - so act now for best color selection.

NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA Five thousand new GHIBLI Motorcycle helmets, with lever activated, three (3) position flip shield and patented *"Easy Action"* quick release chin strap, will be sold as part of a giant publicity campaign for *$69 apiece, or 2 for *$65 ea. to the first four thousand people who write or call the company before midnight, September 30, 1985.

These are the same famous Ghibli Helmets that retail for over $110 each and were featured in the pages of ***Playboy magazine, Ultralight, Cycle World, Cycle Guide, Rider*** and many other leading magazines and referred to as ***"the first totally new helmet to come along in a decade"***.

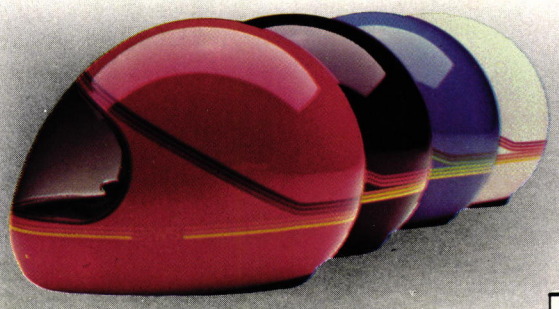
Weighing less than many open faced helmets, the Ghibli still exceeds all National and International government safety standards, including D.O.T. and is fully approved for use in all AMA sanctioned motorcycle competition events. At the same time, Ghibli includes features never before available on motorcycle helmets. Features such as flush mounted *"3-position"* face shield that eliminates whistling and wind noise. A quick-release chin strap mechanism, which enables helmet removal, even with bulky gloves on.

LEVER ACTION: Simply push the lever and the shield opens in one smooth, single hand operation.


THREE POSITION SHIELD: Precision molded flip shield will lock into any of three positions.

NO WHISTLING: Outer shell is completely streamlined, eliminating wind and water leakage.

QUICK RELEASE STRAP: "Easy Action" chin strap, simpler to fasten or release than any other type of chin strap.



Colors: Monza Blue, Alpine White
Ferrari Red, Onyx Black

These GHIBLI Helmets will not be sold at this price by this company in any store. To obtain one at this price, apply in writing or by telephone to the company no later than midnight, September 30, 1985

Each helmet carries a *full one-year warranty*. There is a limit of (2) helmets per address at these prices, but requests mailed or called in early enough (before Sept. 15th, 1985) are permitted to order up to 4 helmets.

To apply for a new Ghibli Helmet, mail this original printed notice (or a copy) together with your name and address and *$69 for one (1) or *$65 ea. (to total $130.00) for two (2) plus only $4.95 for shipping and handling no matter how many helmets you request. Calif. residents add 6% sales tax. Replacement shield in tint or clear, only $9 when purchased with helmet.**

Mail to:
GHIBLI HELMET PROMOTION
3857 Birch St., Dept. C/G -6
Newport Beach, CA 92660

Phone Orders may be called in Mon. - Fri., between 8 A.M. - 5 P.M. Western time.
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OUTSIDE CALIFORNIA
1-800-621-9183

NOTE: Payment may be made by **Visa, Mastercard, American Express** or Money Order. Personal checks require 4 weeks for bank clearance. Do not send cash.

GHIBLI SIZING CHART	
HEAD MEASURE	**HELMET SIZE**
21 3/4" to 22 1/4".	Small
22 3/8" to 23"	Medium
23 1/8" to 23 5/8"	Large
23 3/4" to 24 1/4"	X-Large

*These are promotional prices **only** and therefore are good only thru the dates and times listed above.
**Replacement shields will continue to be available from this address after conclusion of helmet promotion, at slightly higher price. For up to date prices after September 30, 1985 write or call company direct.

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QUOTE:
"The way it lunged across El Mirage had us believing it could have reached the same top speed dragging the Ninja behind it."
—Pg. 25

CYCLE GUIDE

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ON THE COVER:
Oh, say can you see, in the dawn's early light, as Honda's VF1000R blurs its broad stripes for the lens of Rick Cox and Dave Bush on its way through the unflinching eyes of the Chrondek timers? Turn to page 17 to find out which rocket stands alone as the quickest, fastest motorcycle in the land of the free.

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RIDE LIKE A PRO. That means using your head. And riding safely. Always wear a helmet and eye protection. Read your owner's manual carefully. Maintain your machine in safe running condition. Follow the rules of the road and always use common sense. Never drink and ride. Ride at a safe speed

IT'S LONELY AT THE TOP.

You leave in a crowd. You arrive all alone.

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With incomparable precision, Honda's 500 Interceptor™ has moved away from the pack. Turns seem to straighten as you enter. Dips are hammered flat. The road flows underneath, as frame, suspension, brakes and tires work in perfect harmony.

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The 500 Interceptor has a 12-month unlimited mileage warranty. See your local Honda dealer for complete details. Specifications and availability subject to change without notice. Rearview mirrors are standard equipment. †SAE net taken at the crankshaft. *Manufacturer's suggested retail price. ©1985 American Honda Motor Co., Inc. (5/85) For a free brochure, see your Honda dealer. Or write: American Honda, Dept. 088, P.O. Box 7055, No. Hollywood, CA 91609-7055.

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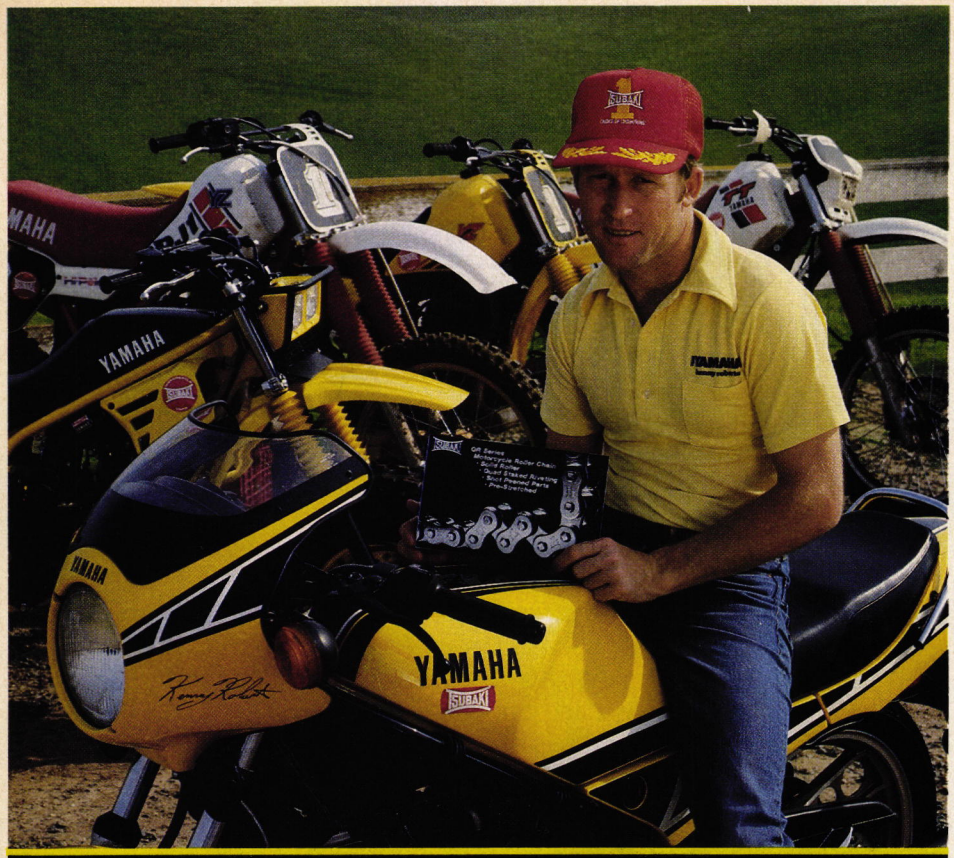
and obey the basic speed law. Slow down before you enter a turn. Give yourself plenty of room when passing cars. Don't make any unsafe modifications. If you're riding a new or unfamiliar machine, take it extra easy. And be nice enough to acknowledge when you are given the right-of-way. Pros know that doing the right things makes riding a lot safer. And more fun.



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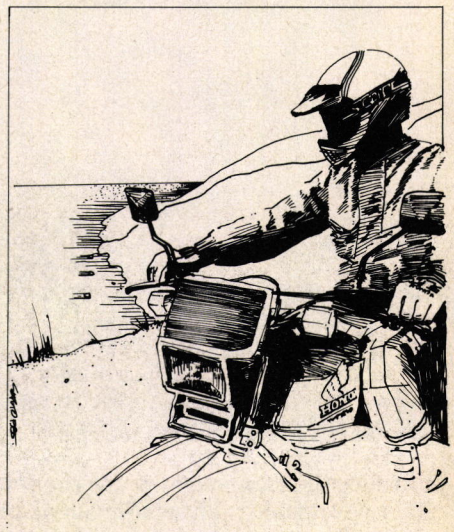

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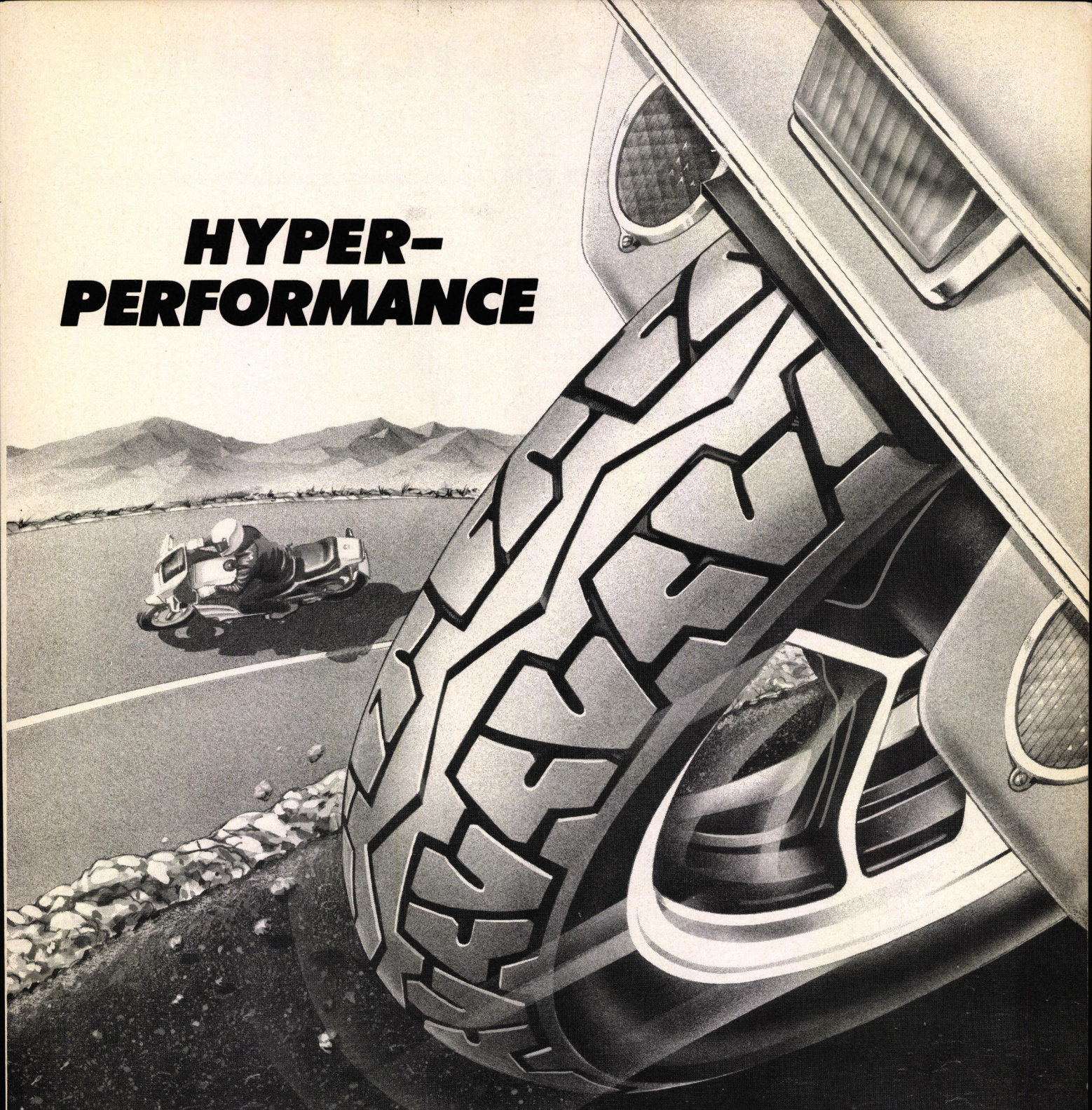
HYPER-PERFORMANCE



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CYCLE GUIDE'S CYCLE GUIDE

Cycle Guide's catalog of recent test hardware—no brag, just fact

OFF-ROAD

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	TYPE	ENGINE TYPE	WHEEL TRAVEL, IN. FRONT/REAR	WEIGHT, LBS.	RAKE/TRAIL, DEGREES/INCHES	GEARS
Cagiva WRX 250-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.1/11.6	232	30.0/4.65	6
Cagiva WMX 250-'84	January '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.7	221	28.0/4.65	6
Can-Am 320 Trials-'84	October '84	Trials	Two-stroke	4.8/4.5	205	25.5/3.00	6
Honda ATC250R-'84	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.8/8.0	311	N/A	5
Honda CR125R-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.2/12.3	195	27.2/4.29	6
Honda CR250R-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.2	216	26.7/4.13	5
Honda CR500R-'85	February '85	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.6/12.3	232	27.5/4.41	5
Honda XR200R-'84	August '84	Enduro	Four-stroke	9.9/9.6	235	26.0/4.13	6
Honda XR350R-'83	June '83	Enduro	Four-stroke	10.9/10.4	253	26.0/3.94	6
Honda XR500R-'83	October '83	Desert	Four-stroke	11.0/12.2	278	25.5/3.94	5
Husqvarna 250CR-'83	January '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.7	227	30.0/5.51	6
Husqvarna 400WR-'84	July '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.0/11.2	242	28.5/5.16	6
Husqvarna 500CR-'85	April '85	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.9	235	27.0/4.72	4
Husqvarna 510TE-'85	March '85	Enduro	Four-stroke	10.6/11.9	263	28.5/5.16	6
Kawasaki KXT250 Tecate-'84	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.6/8.2	319	N/A	5
Kawasaki KDX200-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.0/10.9	214	28.0/4.76	6
Kawasaki KDX250-'83	November '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.1/10.7	232	29.0/5.00	6
Kawasaki KX125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.2	195	27.5/4.57	6
Kawasaki KX250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.6/12.3	220	28.5/4.65	5
Kawasaki KX500-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/11.9	232	29.0/4.80	5
Kawasaki KLR600-'84	September '84	Dual-purpose	Four-stroke	9.2/8.3	322	29.5/4.80	5
Maico 490 Spider-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.2	240	27.0/4.72	4
M-Star 250 Supercross-'84	Nov./Dec. '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.7	230	27.0/4.72	5
Suzuki ALT50-'83	June '83	ATV	Two-stroke	N/A	90	N/A	1
Suzuki Quadracer 250-'85	May '85	ATV	Two-stroke	7.2/8.1	326	N/A	5
Suzuki Quadrunner 250-'84	October '84	ATV	Four-stroke	1.0/N/A	384	N/A	5
Suzuki RM125-'85	May '85	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.4/11.8	202	29.0/4.84	6
Suzuki RM250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.9	220	27.8/4.41	5
Yamaha BW200-'85	April '85	Trail	Four-stroke	6.3/6.6	249	27.3/3.46	5
Yamaha IT200-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.0/10.6	211	28.0/4.53	6
Yamaha TY350-'85	July '85	Trials	Two-stroke	6.5/4.8	193	23.0/1.93	6
Yamaha XT250-'84	Nov./Dec. '84	Dual-purpose	Four-stroke	9.7/7.9	266	28.3/4.60	6
Yamaha YZ125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.3	194	27.7/4.57	6
Yamaha YZ250-'85	June '85	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.5/12.3	219	28.0/4.69	5
Yamaha YZ490-'84	June '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.7	227	28.5/4.72	4

STREET

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE*	DISPLACEMENT, CC	QUARTER-MILE, SEC./MPH	TOP SPEED, MPH	WEIGHT, LBS.	FUEL CONSUMPTION, MPG	STOPPING DISTANCE FROM 60 MPH, FT.
BMW R100RS-'84	October '84	2C/G	979.9	13.425/95.84	111	506	45–57	163
BMW K100RS-'84	October '84	4I/G	987.2	12.381/109.48	133	532	39–54	139
H-D FXRS Low Glide-'84	January '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	13.917/94.57	112	575	38–48	140
H-D FXRT Sport Glide-'85	October '84	45 deg. 2D/H	1337.7	14.180/90.36	92	640	28–51	126
H-D FLTC Tour Glide-'84	March '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	14.603/88.75	107	774	39–54	152
H-D XLH Sportster-'85	February '85	45 deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.742/95.94	111	490	43–58	146
Honda Gold Wing Ltd Ed.-'85	March '85	4C/G	1181.9	13.346/98.36	113	810	37–45	134
Honda Nighthawk S-'84	February '84	4A/G	696.7	12.048/109.75	125	492	28–45	125
Honda NS250R-'85	May '85	90 deg. 2D/F††	249.3	13.091/101.58	121	339	27–38	135
Honda VF500F Interceptor-'84	July '84	90 deg. 4D/F	497.6	12.484/106.00	126	419	33–48	123
Honda VF700F Interceptor-'84	October '84	90 deg. 4D/F	698.9	12.323/106.50	124	512	37–48	136
Honda VF750F Interceptor-'84	May '84	90 deg. 4D/F	748.1	11.890/114.64	140	511	23–39	127
Honda VF1000R-'85	July '85	90 deg. 4D/F	998.4	11.308/121.78	149	578	20–42	135
Honda VF700S Sabre-'85	January '85	90 deg. 4D/G	698.9	12.358/109.09	121	514	28–48	136
Honda VT1100C Shadow-'85	June '85	45 deg. 2D/G	1099.2	13.022/100.33	112	560	33–44	127
Honda V65 Magna-'85	February '85	90 deg. 4D/G	1098.0	11.440/118.42	142	566	34–46	133
Kawasaki Ninja 600R-'85	March '85	4A/F	592.6	12.124/109.09	135	448	40–48	135
Kawasaki GPz550-'85	March '85	4A/F	553.8	12.478/104.89	121	432	44–54	137
Kawasaki GPz750-'84	May '84	4A/F	739.0	12.114/110.97	135	502	37–47	120
Kawasaki GPz1100-'84	May '84	4A/F	1089.9	11.312/120.80	145	560	24–48	120
Kawasaki Eliminator-'85	April '85	4A/G	908.2	11.405/117.49	134	569	22–41	131
Kawasaki Ninja-'84	May '84	4A/F	908.2	11.181/123.62	146	523	24–44	126
Kawasaki Voyager-'84	March '84	6A/G	1286.1	13.346/97.61	116	882	28–44	142
Laverda RGS 1000-'84	December '83	3A/F	980.8	12.565/106.50	130	556	25–40	140
Suzuki GS550ES-'85	May '85	4A/F	572.3	12.551/106.50	119	447	33–48	133
Suzuki GS700E-'85	January '85	4A/F	699.5	11.978/112.21	125	485	27–53	140
Suzuki GS1150E-'85	June '85	4A/F	1135.4	11.032/121.78	146	529	30–55	138
Suzuki GS1150ES-'84	October '84	4A/F	1135.4	11.268/122.44	148	542	26–51	122
Suzuki GV700GL Madura-'85	Nov./Dec. '84	82 deg. 4D/G	698.5	13.307/102.15	111	546	23–45	143
Suzuki GV1200GL Madura-'85	February '85	82 deg. 4D/G	1165.9	11.364/117.18	140	576	28–45	131
Suzuki VS700GLF Intruder-'85	July '85	2D/G	699.7	12.998/101.01	112	442	44–63	132
Yamaha FJ600-'84	July '84	4A/F	598.8	12.468/105.63	126	435	32–50	129
Yamaha FJ1100-'85	April '85	4A/F	1097.6	11.002/123.28	147	543	30–47	138
Yamaha FZ750-'85	June '85	45 deg. 4A/F	749.6	11.317/118.57	140	485	31–50	129
Yamaha RZ350-'84	July '84	2A/F††	347.4	13.529/97.61	111	357	26–53	122
Yamaha RZ500-'84	September '84	4D/F††	499.7	12.053/112.64	136	439	25–37	N/A
Yamaha Maxim X-'85	May '85	4A/G	697.3	11.779/113.63	121	505	25–47	135
Yamaha Venture Royale-'84	March '84	70 deg. 4D/G	1197.6	12.759/101.46	124	752	37–53	137
Yamaha V-Max-'85	May '85	70 deg. 4D/G	1197.6	10.922/127.47	151	596	23–32	137

*__A__-Transverse, __B__-Vertical (single-cylinder only), __C__-Horizontally Opposed, __D__-Tandem Vee, __E__-Transverse Vee, __F__-Chain Final Drive, __G__-Shaft Final Drive, __H__-Belt Final Drive, __I__-Horizontal Longitudinal; † indicates a calculated top speed; †† indicates a two-stroke engine

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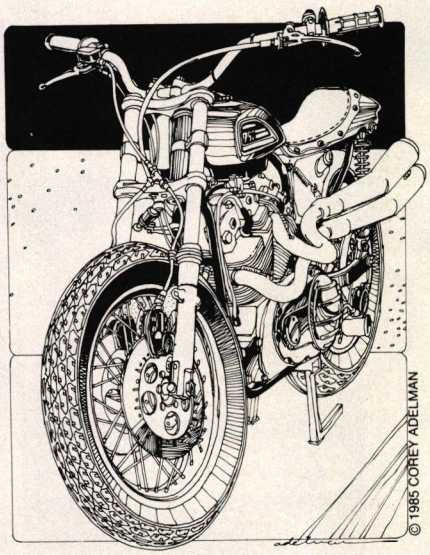
Fickle Fashions

The latest styles from Paris. And Dakar.

• Surveying the sweeping tide of fully faired semi-racers now rocketing along America's streets, even the most cynical might conclude that the café racer finally has hit it big in America. For decades, the café bike has been a bit of American marginalia, further from the mainstream of motorcycle affairs than even the chopper. Perhaps it was because the café bike was born in Europe about three decades ago, where its racer pretensions were not simply signs of a rider's financial inability to go racing for real, but also a part of the angry gush of youthful energy that culminated in the Mods-and-Rockers wars of the early '60s. This stuff was alien to America, where a motorcycle had been—and continues to be—not transportation but sheer fun. For the Mods and Rockers who clashed at Brighton, Vespa against Vincent, the bike was not just an expression, it was *wheels.*

Against this backdrop, the sporadic popularity of café bikes in the U.S.A. is not hard to understand. They have always been more visible than populous, at least until the current wave of Ninjas, Interceptors and FJs rolled over us, and so their absorption into our motorcycling body politic is all the more telling. It is worth noting that some key things had to happen before any Ninjas won their ways into American garages, going with their roadracer looks where no roadracy bikes had ever gone before—and certainly not the likes of the failed KZ1000 Z1-R. First, the genuinely absurd riding position of the true café bike had to be modified; we Americans, even in our youth, do not like to hunch uncomfortably on a Superslab. Second, the racing lineage had to be clarified for an American idiom, and so this wave of café bikes really is mimicking not some Isle of Man TT winner, but an Eddie Lawson Superbike. And third, the performance had to get *American,* which is to say that in addition to the long legs of a tall-geared, would-be roadracer, we had to have instant lunge. Because here in America, trying to go European-fast for more than a few miles gets you nothing but jail, whereas the pleasant blast around a slow truck, *à la* Dodge Hemi, is a time-honored American joy.

All this is most amusing when you take a look at events on the other side of



the Atlantic, where all this stuff originated. Are these new, highly potent, highly stylized café racers, as you might expect, bowling them over?

Nope. Over there, they're on dirtbikes. Or at least, the dirtbike equivalent of a café racer.

There is more irony in the facets of this than seems possible. Here we have an American riding scene finally wooed to a European style, and the Europeans are going crazy over—street scramblers!

Well, not exactly. But if you think back to the early '60s, when any manufacturer interested in American sales had to build his streetbike with high pipes, knobby tires and braced handlebars to sell it to Bruce and Randy, you can see the parallel. We were buying those things then because they said brawn; virility was implied in every huge knob. The same goes for the kids today, who ride Paris-to-Dakar repliracers in France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, England and Austria.

Walk through any European town. What are the kids under 18 riding? If they're really young, mopeds. If they're a little older, something with knobbies, wide handlebars, a huge gas tank and a phony number plate over the headlight. Café racers? Old guys ride those.

Now it might be simply stretching the point to see poetic justice in all this, since Paris-to-Dakar isn't an American fantasy-race. But even if the venue is not, the concept is pure American—pure West, in fact. The Lone Cowboy on his bike, challenging the puckerbushes and natives. No more Ace Café for the New Wave-style kids of Europe; they're looking for puckerbushes in the town square of Bourg-St. Maurice and Milano. (Actually, what they're really looking for is attention from girls—as usual—and that drives the second new phenomenon of this style: Now that they're riding with tall bars, slowly, they somehow have decided to forgo the helmet, stringent laws or no. All the better to show off the expensive haircuts, see?)

There is yet more irony in their search for imagery. As any urban guerrilla knows, an off-road motorcycle is the best urban transportation you can buy or build; the long-travel suspension eats the ubiquitous potholes for breakfast without burping, and the agile steering allows forward motion to be maintained no matter what kind of awful mess the taxis have made. Besides, the bike's low-end grunt is just right for squirting ahead of the proles, for making the lights and escaping the chaos. So there is method—however inadvertently achieved, however driven by the need of the manufacturers to develop new markets—in the fashion-conscious madness of the Euro-kids who have forsaken the café racer for the streetified enduro. However the young have come to be riding them, they have the right bike for the game, for a café racer most assuredly is the wrong bike—at least for that game. And some less style-crazy kids know it, too: In a recent tour of Europe, I saw more than a few enduros equipped with super-sticky road tires, a peculiar but effective change from the idiom.

The idiom itself knows no age or displacement limits; one middle-aged Italian rider I spoke with sniffed that only young kids on tiny two-strokes characterized the phenomenon, but I saw post-teens on dual-purpose 500s almost as often as I spotted genuinely young squids squirting from corner to corner on 125s. Indeed, this same Italian gent believed that the moral fiber of his country's youth was shown to be rotting not by this enduro madness but by the kids patrolling the streets on fully faired 250s, sans helmets, sans leathers, sans skills, and sans care about any of it.

Given the cyclic swings of fashion, does all this mean that our new fondness for Ninjas and Interceptors will give way to African enduro-bike passion? Probably not. After all, the guts of this Paris-to-Dakar stuff is old hat in the country that invented the street scrambler. Furthermore, in America, you don't have to trade one fantasy in for another one. Most garages here are big enough for a lot of things—including clashing fashion.

—Steve Thompson

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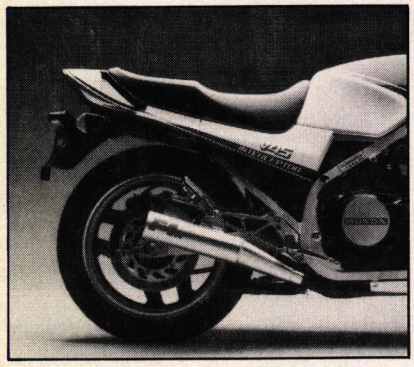
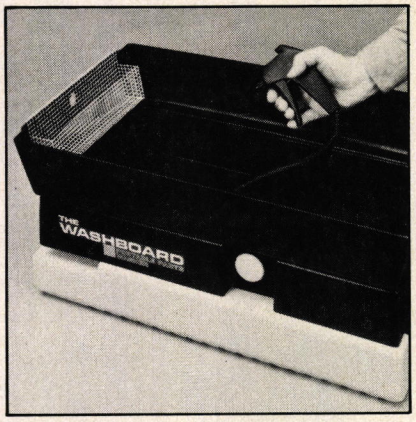
Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

Motomart

The buys of summer

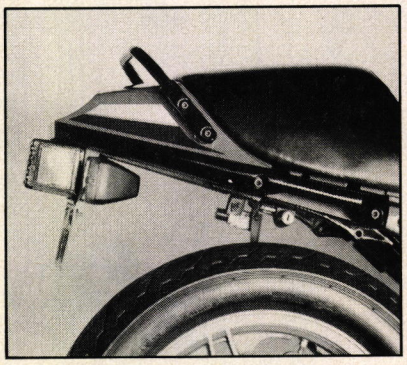
Quiet Aluminum: If you want your Honda Interceptor, Kawasaki 900 Ninja or Yamaha FJ1100 to sound like the superbike it is, F1 might have the answer. The F1 R slip-on mufflers are an all-aluminum version of the firm's popular replacement mufflers, and are claimed to weigh 5.5 pounds per set, as much as 15 pounds less than stock. Also, F1 claims the silencers require no jetting changes. Retail price is $199 per set, and the mufflers can be purchased from motorcycle dealers or directly from F1, Dept. CG, 4760 E. Bryson Ave., Anaheim, California 92807.



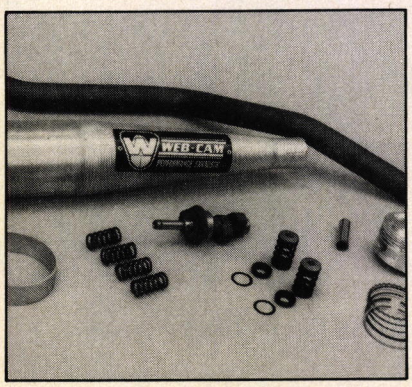


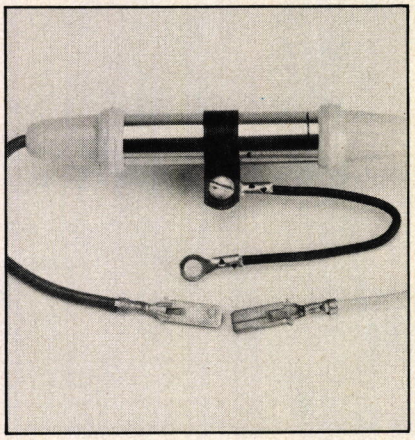
Rinse, Please: You won't find Seacliff International's Washboard in a dentist's office, but it will help you clean your motorcycle's delicate parts and cavities. The cleaner includes a 5-quart drip tank and a separate 2-gallon tank to hold the solvent; a hand-held squeeze pump eliminates the need for electricity or compressed air to rinse parts. Retail price for the Washboard is $99.95, and you can get more information from Seacliff International, Dept. CG, P.O. Box 50486, Pasadena, California 91105.

Losing Your Tail: Tired of having your GPz or Ninja blend into the woodwork? Try slicing off its tail with Competition Werke's Tail Conversion Kit. The stainless-steel kit allows removal of the plastic fender, yet retains the license-plate holder. In addition, the conversion tucks the turn signals in approximately 2 inches on each side. Kits are available for all GPzs or Ninjas, and retail prices range from $29.95 to $39.95. For more information, drop a line to Competition Werkes, Dept. CG, 7021 E. Alondra Blvd. No. 11, Paramount, California 90723.



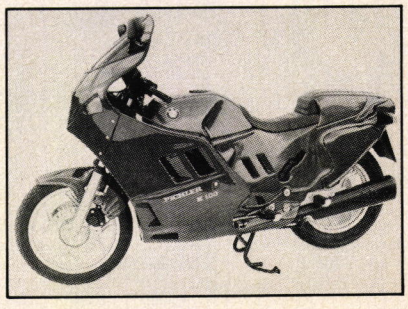
Webbed Kit: Web-Cam now offers ATC200X owners a quick way to more paddle power: the Pro System Kit. The kit includes a hardened camshaft, forged pistons in either 10.5:1 or 12.5:1 compression ratios, Pro-Aluminum exhaust system, valve-spring kit and heavy-duty clutch springs. Web-Cam claims the package offers an increase in both midrange and top-end power. Retail price for the Pro System Kit is $259.95, and for more information, cast a line to Web-Cam, Dept. CG, 1663 Superior Ave., Costa Mesa, California 92627.





Hey, Look at Me!: You can get the full attention of drivers behind you, Delta Radio claims, with its Attention Getter. The device pulses the bike's brake light whenever the brakes are applied. Delta claims installation is a simple two-wire operation, and that the Attention Getter will work with most 12-volt electrical systems. Retail price for the unit is $21.95. For more information, contact Delta Radio Co., Dept CG, P.O. Box 531, Spring Valley, New York 10977.

Plastique Mystique: If the looks of your BMW K100RS don't excite you any more, let Pichler of America get your blood pumping with the PK1 fairing set. The kit combines a full fairing with a smoked windscreen and integral turn signals, plus vented lowers that extend back underneath the footpegs. Also available is the PK1 raceback, which covers the entire sides and back of the motorcycle. Unpainted, the fairing retails for $675 and the raceback for $545; painted, the fairing retails for $890 and the raceback goes for $710. For more information, contact Pichler of America, Dept. CG, 824 W. 10th St., No.109, Austin, Texas 78701.



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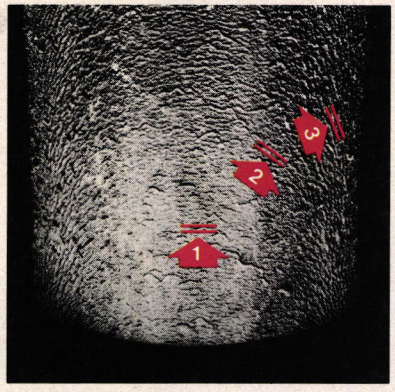
To solve the problem, we turned to the best expert we could find: our own racing slick.

As you can see in the photo, the stresses (or forces) that acted on our slick during a race left ripples on its surface. These ripples run perpendicular to the direction of the forces. And they fall into 3 groups:

1. The forces from acceleration on the straightaway. 2. The forces from acceleration plus cornering on curves. 3. The forces of cornering at full lean.



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The front tire has many deep grooves at the center for straight line water dispersal at speed. Both tread depth and amount of grooving are progressively reduced toward the shoulder for cornering stability.

On both tires, grooving disappears at the shoulder, more rubber is on the ground, and the tires act like slicks.

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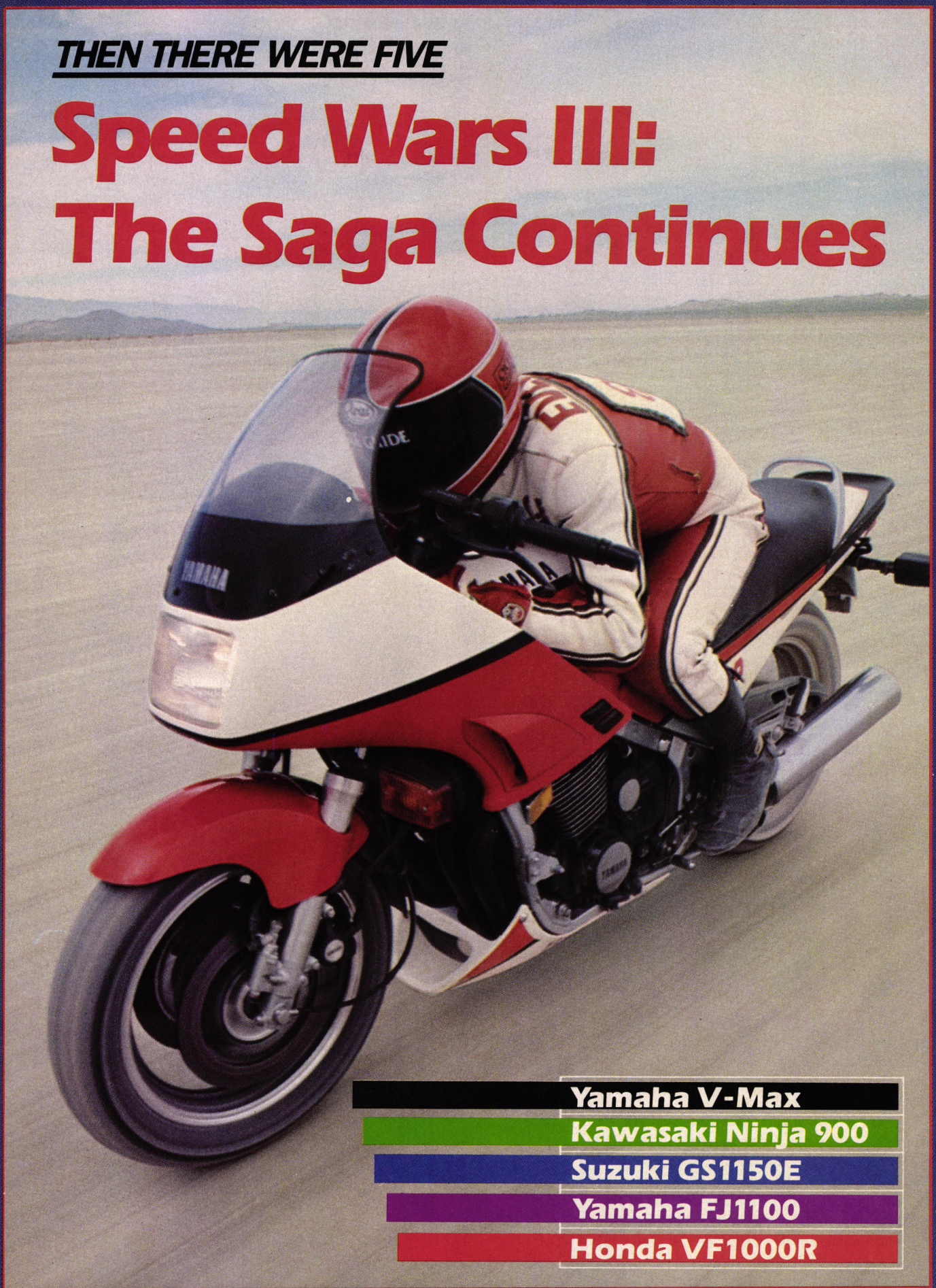
Standard faceplate is black, red or white available on request. For pricing and ordering information on the CP4 and other Kiwi products, write to DynaTour Corp., 1944 N. Narragansett Ave., Chicago, IL 60639

THEN THERE WERE FIVE

Speed Wars III: The Saga Continues



Yamaha V-Max
Kawasaki Ninja 900
Suzuki GS1150E
Yamaha FJ1100
Honda VF1000R

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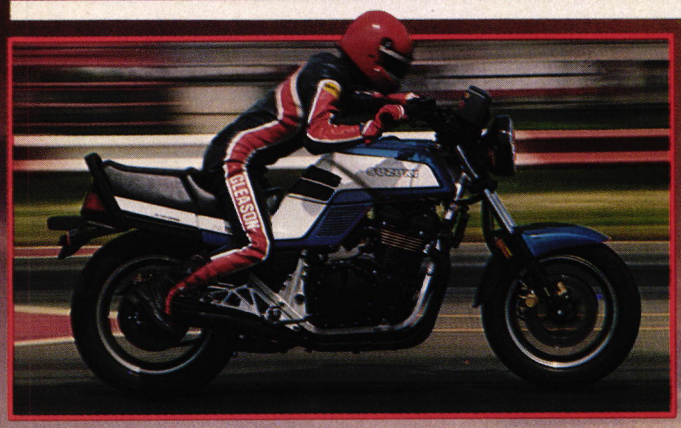
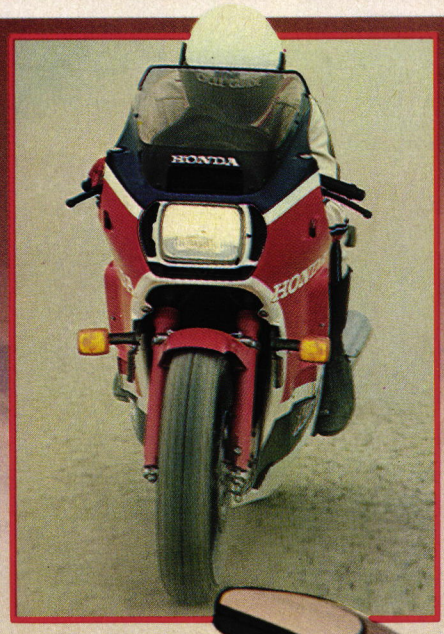


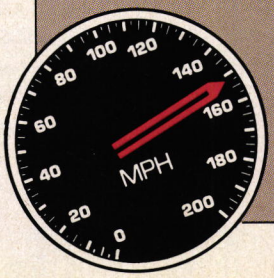


Welcome to motorcycling's quickest and fastest show on earth.

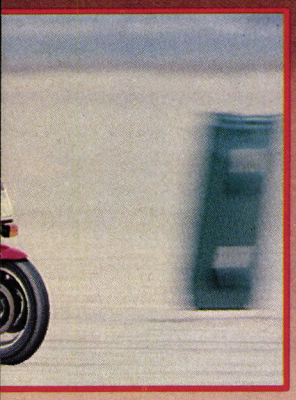
Desert be damned, at 5:30 a.m. it's cold in the Mojave. It's also quiet; so quiet that the solitary moan of an engine straining at redline carries for miles, long before the brightness at the center of the looming dust cloud can be recognized as the headlight of an approaching motorcycle. At more than 140 mph, the bike covers the last 100 yards of the 1.7-mile course in less than two seconds, but from the saddle the only indication of the speed is the wind tugging at your leathers. As the bike shrieks through the tim-

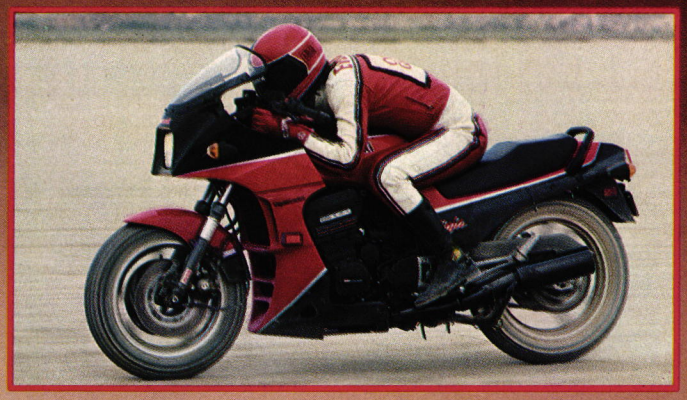
Kawasaki Ninja

¼-mile 10.756/126.05



Top Speed 151.25 mph





It came down to a classic case of finesse versus brute force.

ing lights, the Chrondeks tell the story: It's a stone; only 145.86 mph.

Welcome to motorcycling's quickest and fastest show on earth. Here, nothing but sheer, mind-blowing, retina-detaching speed counts, and 145 mph seems slow, especially with this year's crop of pavement rippers. Two years ago, when we first pitted the top mega-motors against one another on dragstrip and dry lake, Kawasaki's 750 Turbo took home all the marbles with a quarter-mile performance of 10.839/122.95 and a

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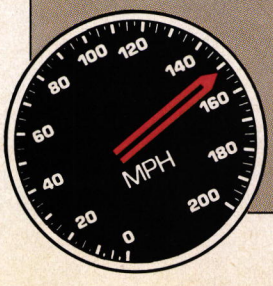
Yamaha V-max

¼-mile 10.610/128.20



Top Speed 150.76 mph

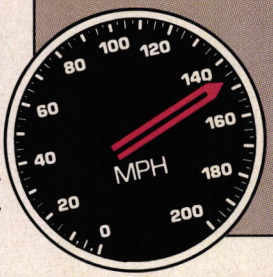
Continued

top speed of 145.07 mph. In this year's running, that showing would have put a lock on *last* place. The 146.82 mph top speed turned in by last year's winner, Yamaha's FJ1100, would have left it 1 mph out of last place on the dry lake this year, almost 5 mph down from the highest speed posted.

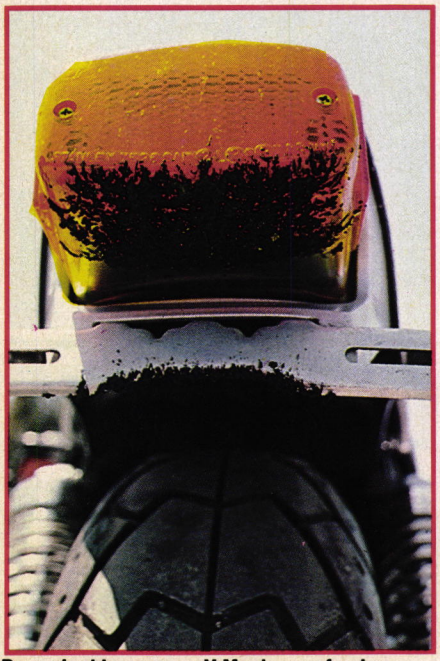
In this august company of high-speed movers, running in place is to fall behind. That's why, when we made up the roster for this year's competition, we had our

Suzuki GS1150E

¼-mile 10.430 / 128.20



Top Speed 145.86 mph



Burned rubber covers V-Max's rear fender

Sacrificed at the altar of speed.

Baylands' Chrondeks and Jay Gleason determined the quickest of the five

Suzuki's 1150 needed only one shot at the quarter-mile title.

doubts about two members of last year's squad that again made roll call: Kawasaki's Ninja 900 and Yamaha's FJ1100. Neither of those had sufficient changes to expect it to outdo last year's bike; in fact in testing, the '85 FJ1100 felt slightly *slower* than last year's.

The other members of this high-speed scrimmage were culled from the manufacturers' 1985 list of those most likely to succeed. Honda's VF1000R, with a full fairing and four more horsepower than last year's top-speed winner, the VF1000F Interceptor, seemed a good choice for top-speed honors. Suzuki's GS1150E weighs in at 13 pounds less than the '84 ES, so the E-model promised to outdo its sporting stablemate at the dragstrip. We weren't sure, though, how the E's lack of a full fairing would affect its dry-lake performance; the E's smaller frontal area might turn out to be an advantage, compared to the ES, with its large, bulbous fairing. The last of these musclebound monsters was the only one considered likely to take home the marbles in both categories. True to its nature, Yamaha's V-Max might hammer out a dual win based on sheer brute force alone. Time—and the Chrondek timing lights—would tell.

The first set of lights was at Baylands Raceway in Fremont, California. Shipping all five contestants 400 miles from the CYCLE GUIDE offices isn't exactly practical, but there's a simple reason for the change of venue: The point here is to compare *motorcycles,* not riders or dragstrips, so we got the best rider available, Jay Gleason, and the best dragstrip available, Baylands Raceway. Our regular testing dragstrip, Carlsbad Raceway, can't match Baylands' combination of traction and weather conditions; the Fremont track is the best on the West Coast, and one of the best in the country. And having Jay Gleason run these thoroughbreds anywhere else is like sitting Willie Shoemaker on Secretariat and running him on a hockey rink.

Gleason's first run confirmed our choices, too, when he stuffed the Ninja through Bayland's lights with a 10.949-second/125.34-mph run, almost matching the Kawasaki's best from last year. Two tries later he had the Ninja's best time, 10.756/126.05. In this pavement rippling crowd, though, the Ninja's quickest time is a middle-of-the-pack, third-place showing. A tick behind the Ninja came last year's overall winner, Yamaha's FJ1100, unable to muster any better than a 10.781/

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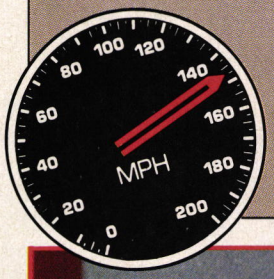
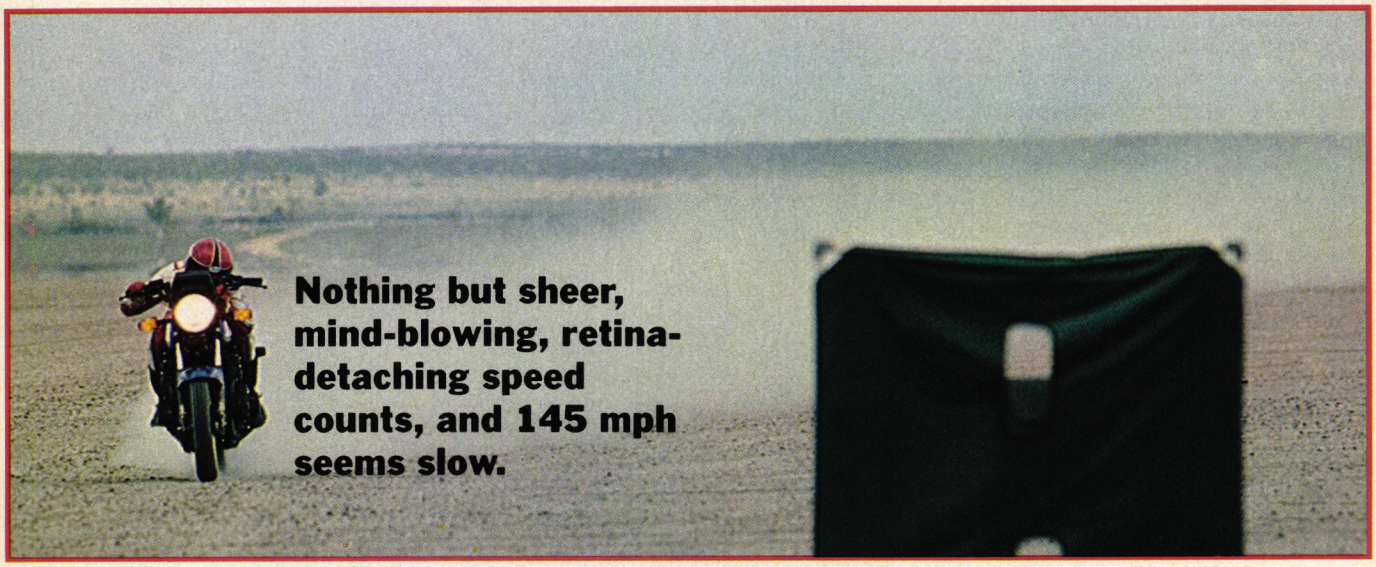
Yamaha FJ1100



¼-mile 10.781/124.30

Top Speed 146.57 mph



Honda VF1000R

¼-mile 10.880/124.48

Top Speed 149.00 mph

124.30 pass; exactly 0.1 second off last year's pace, which slipped it back into fourth. Holding down last place, Honda's VF1000R couldn't overcome its 578-pound weight, finally posting a 10.880-second/124.48-mph blast.

After the FJ's disappointing showing, it was up to the V-Max to carry the Yamaha banner into the fray. But a frustrating series of weak starts from a slightly off-key vee-four gave the heavy cruiser a best of "only" 10.610/128.20— certainly no slouch, but not enough to put the lid on the competition. Gleason noted that our particular test bike wasn't quite as sharp as other V-Maxes he'd ridden. "It's just not there," he said about the vee-four's power. So the battle for first place at the dragstrip came down to Suzuki's GS1150E, but it turned out to be a one-punch fight. Gleason started with a 10.543/126.56 pass right off the trailer, and as it turned out that was enough to put the V-Max—and everything else—back *on* the trailer. After a series of picture-perfect launches, Gleason's gunfighter reflexes and safecracker touch finally massaged a 10.430-second/128.20-mph run from the GS, but any one of *seven* of the 1150's eight passes would have set the others cooling their heels.

The Suzuki's victory at Baylands complicated matters as far as the overall results went. Based on the top speed of last year's ES—142.62 mph, placing it behind the VF1000F, the FJ1100, the Ninja and the 750 Turbo—it was a long shot to expect the big Suzuki to reign at El Mirage, which meant we'd wind up with one winner at the dragstrip and another on the dry lake. But that possibility always exists, simply because the requirements for tire-shredding acceleration and tire-stretching top speed don't always coincide. The dragstrip rewards traction and a high power-to-weight ratio; top speed depends on aerodynamic drag and total power output. Of course, enough power can overcome almost any deficiency, so we still figured the V-Max's claimed 145 horses could hammer its Kelvinator-class frontal area to an overall win.

Sharing that opinion was Jack Dolan, board officer for the Southern California

Timing Association, FIM steward for the AMA, and our official timekeeper and guide into the intricacies of El Mirage dry lake. In addition to providing the equipment for the high-speed half of the test, Dolan also answered the question about excess tire slip on the dry lakebed. In past tests, some people have said the top speeds at El Mirage were artificially low, because the adobe surface allows the bikes' rear tires to slip at high speeds. Dolan noted that tire slip becomes a problem only beyond 165 mph, and it's made obvious by a broken tread pattern left by the bike as it runs through the traps. And in fact, a day's worth of passes over the course left an unbroken surface with no sign of tire slip.

The first series of passes also showed that the Suzuki was well out of the running for the overall win. As both Mike Gillies and Charles Everitt flattened themselves over the bikes, the GS consistently tripped the lights 3-4 mph slower than the top three runners, eventually clicking off a best of 145.86 mph—significantly faster than last year's ES, but a comparative slug in this stratospheric performance arena. The FJ likewise bettered its debut appearance, but its 146.57-mph encore nailed down only fourth place.

Honda's VF1000R extended the tradition set by last year's VF1000F Interceptor by smoking Yamaha's FJ1100 at the lake; this year, however, the competition heated up so that the VF's 149.00-mph figure relegated Honda's vee-four to a close-but-no-cheroot third. Interestingly, the Honda's placement was due as much to over-tall gearing as it was to a lack of horsepower. The cafe Honda distinguished itself as the only member of this elite group unable to pull redline in top gear over the 1.7-mile course, repeatedly howling through the lights 400-500 rpm shy of its 11,000-rpm peak. And that margin prevented Honda from repeating as the most flagrant potential offender in the land of the double-nickel.

Winning that coveted distinction came down to a pitched battle between Kawasaki's Ninja and Yamaha's V-Max, and the ensuing conflict was a classic case of finesse versus brute force. The hot-rod V-Max left no doubt as to which bike had the horsepower; the way it lunged across El Mirage had us believing it could have reached the same top speed dragging the Ninja behind it. With its barn-door aerodynamics—and little more than its

Continued

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Vincentesque speedometer to shield the rider—the V-Max's 150.76-mph top speed is a triumph of V-Boosted cubic inches over gale-force winds.

But it's not a triumph over the Ninja. Time and again, the "little" Kawasaki stopped the SCTA Chrondeks a heartbeat ahead of the big-bore Yamaha, ultimately screaming through the final 132 feet at 151.25 mph, a scant 0.49 mph faster than Yamaha's musclebike. That's almost 6 mph ahead of the '84 Ninja, though; on a machine that's supposed to be unchanged from last year, that margin was enough for us to suspect this year's contender might have been "massaged" before being dropped on our doorstep. Just to be sure, we plucked the Kawasaki out of the lineup and hustled it over to Cycle Tune. They lopped off the Ninja's head, inspected the ports, valves, cams, carburetors, bore, stroke and tonsils on the 908cc motor. Their verdict after all that poking, prodding, and peering? It's stock. "Just a good runner," according to Cycle Tune.

It's certainly good enough to muddle the results, at least as far as the numbers go. Because when it comes to picking an overall winner, none of the bikes posted a clear-cut victory. The Suzuki's fall from first to last place between the dragstrip and dry lake clearly knocked it out of contention as the top dog. And the Ninja backed up its stunning run at El Mirage with only a middling showing on Baylands' blacktop. Then there's Yamaha's V-Max, a bike that posted a win in neither arena, but was behind both leaders like a rampaging bull, snorting hard and ready to trample them if either stumbled.

In fact, the V-Max ran close enough to both bikes for us to pronounce it the 1985 King of Speed. And we're making that choice for somewhat the same reason we gave the FJ1100 the title last year. Despite what some might view as a tie between the V-Max and the Ninja, the major emphasis on American roads has been—and continues to be—acceleration, and there Yamaha's vee-four bullet holds a decided edge. In fact, from anything but a dead stop, the V-Max leaves Suzuki's GS1150E for dead; it's only the ferocity of the Suzuki's launch that put it ahead of the V-Max at Baylands.

So while cynics might think our selection is a matter of interpretation, we'll offer this warning to those GS1150E and Ninja owners who might be tempted to pull the trigger on one of Yamaha's cruise missiles: Don't miss. •

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GUIDE LINES

Cycle Guide's Monthly Chronicle of Scoops, Tips, Rumors and Hard Facts

BY LARRY WORKS

COMING SOON

• You've heard of the Amazonas. You've even read about it in this column. But always before you were reading about a whimsical, Volkswagen-powered Brazilian bike with a decidely elephantine quality, and a history that went back to 1977. This time, though, it's all different: You're reading about the 1985 Amazonas, soon to be available in the United States. And this Amazonas has had updates to its carburetion, exhaust system, shift linkage, brakes and fairing to ready it for U.S. sale. In fact, Amazonas models are, even now, undergoing testing for EPA and DOT certification. But one item that caused some consternation was the Amazonas' reverse gear; accordingly, the U.S. version will have a large, removable handle that must be inserted in the transmission to engage reverse.

• While the Amazonas undoubtedly isn't for everyone, it might be irresistible to some. And exclusivity clearly is part of its inimitable mystique. To that end, Amazonas spokesmen report that although the Brazilian manufacturing plant currently has a production capacity of 110 bikes per month, production is being kept to 30 units per month to retain the marque's exclusivity. You can be certain—at least for now—that an afternoon cruise on an Amazonas won't net you the embarrassment of seeing a dozen bikes just like yours. And although U.S. distribution of special-order motorcycles is said to be set for 1985, early reports indicate that the bike will be sold in kit form in four stages, to allow a customer to build his Amazonas the way he sees fit. That makes a certain amount of sense, because of the sheer numbers of VW engines available, just waiting for a two-wheel future.

As for the Amazonas' past, a concern for circumventing parts-availability problems common to some Japanese motorcycles was a critical factor in the Brazilian bike's design. As a result, the machine's internals are "absolutely primitive and simple" according to Amazonas spokesmen. The bike's powerplant is said to be so understressed it will "last forever." Think of it as the Checker Marathon of the two-wheel world.

• Also coming soon, although for now only for the Japanese market, is a new Honda, the CBX250S. But don't count on this one to dominate the ultra-competitive Japanese quarter-liter performance class; the watchwords here are economy and all-around performance. You might not be able to tell that

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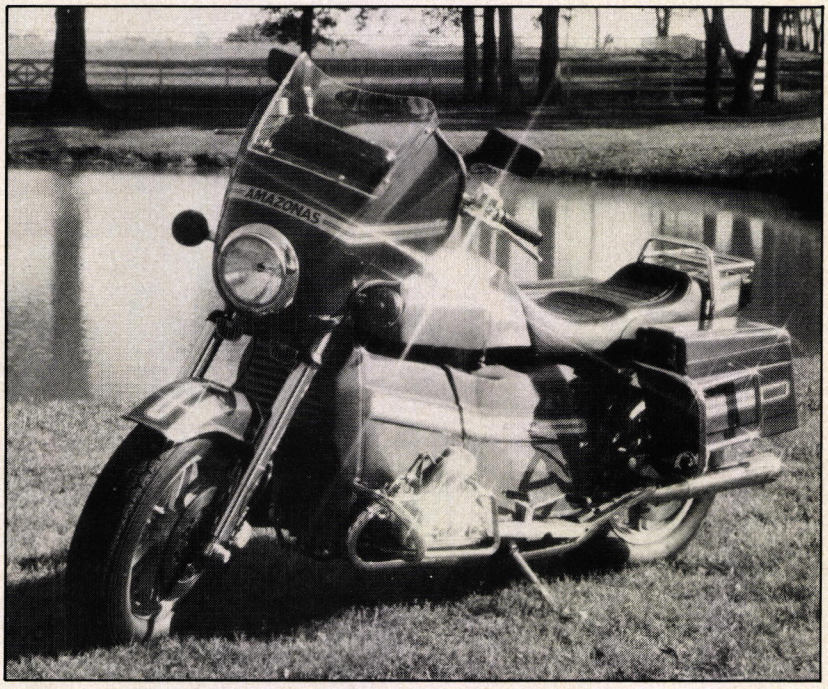

Soon-to-be released 1985 Amazonas is still in the EPA test shed

Rolling testimony to the ever-higher price of exclusivity.

Domestic-market CBX250 bears the earmarks of a pavement warrior

But inside the armor beats the heart of a commuter.

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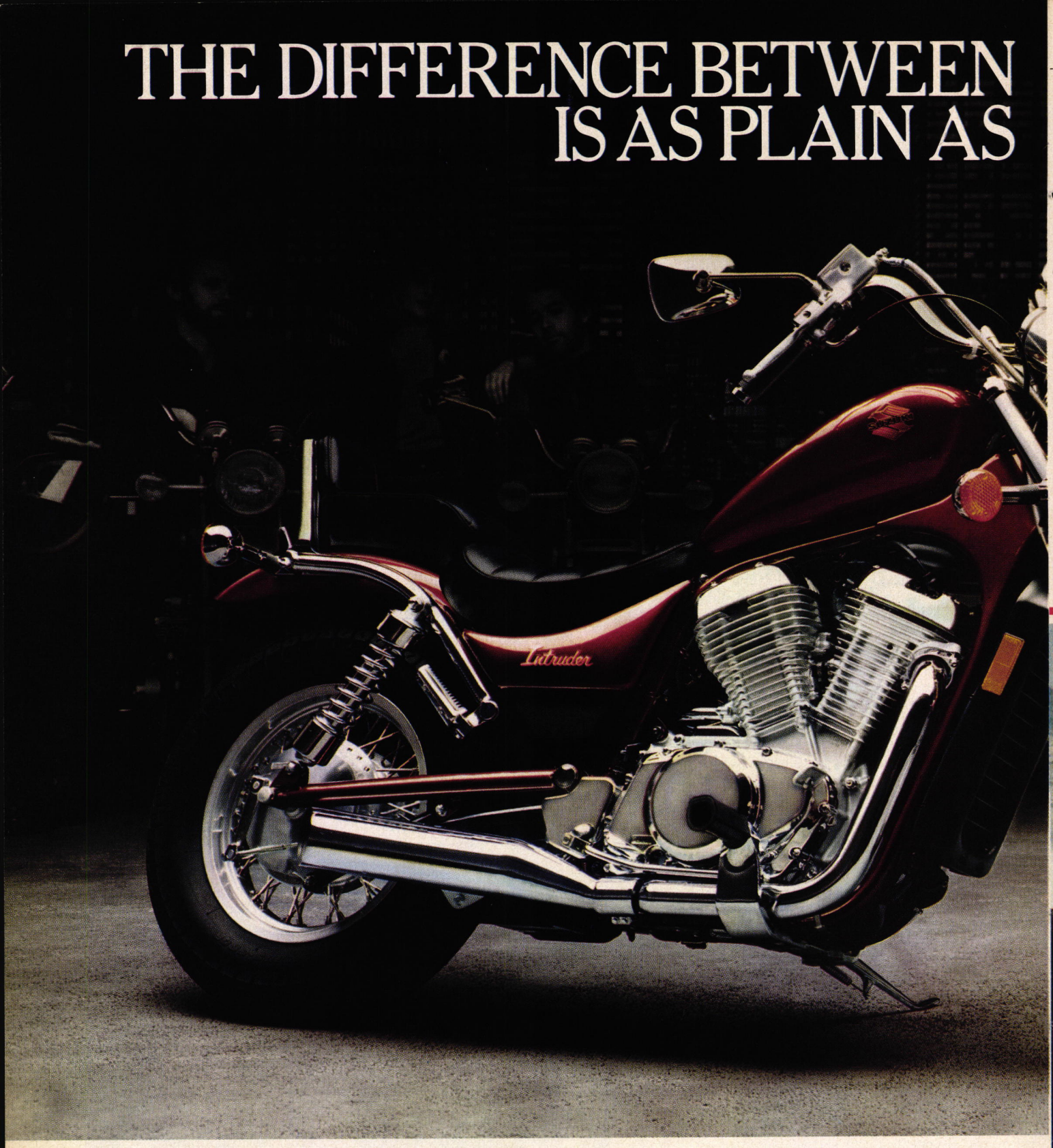

They could see it as soon as I rode my new Suzuki Intruder into town. No other cruiser looks as custom. No other V-twin sounds this mean.

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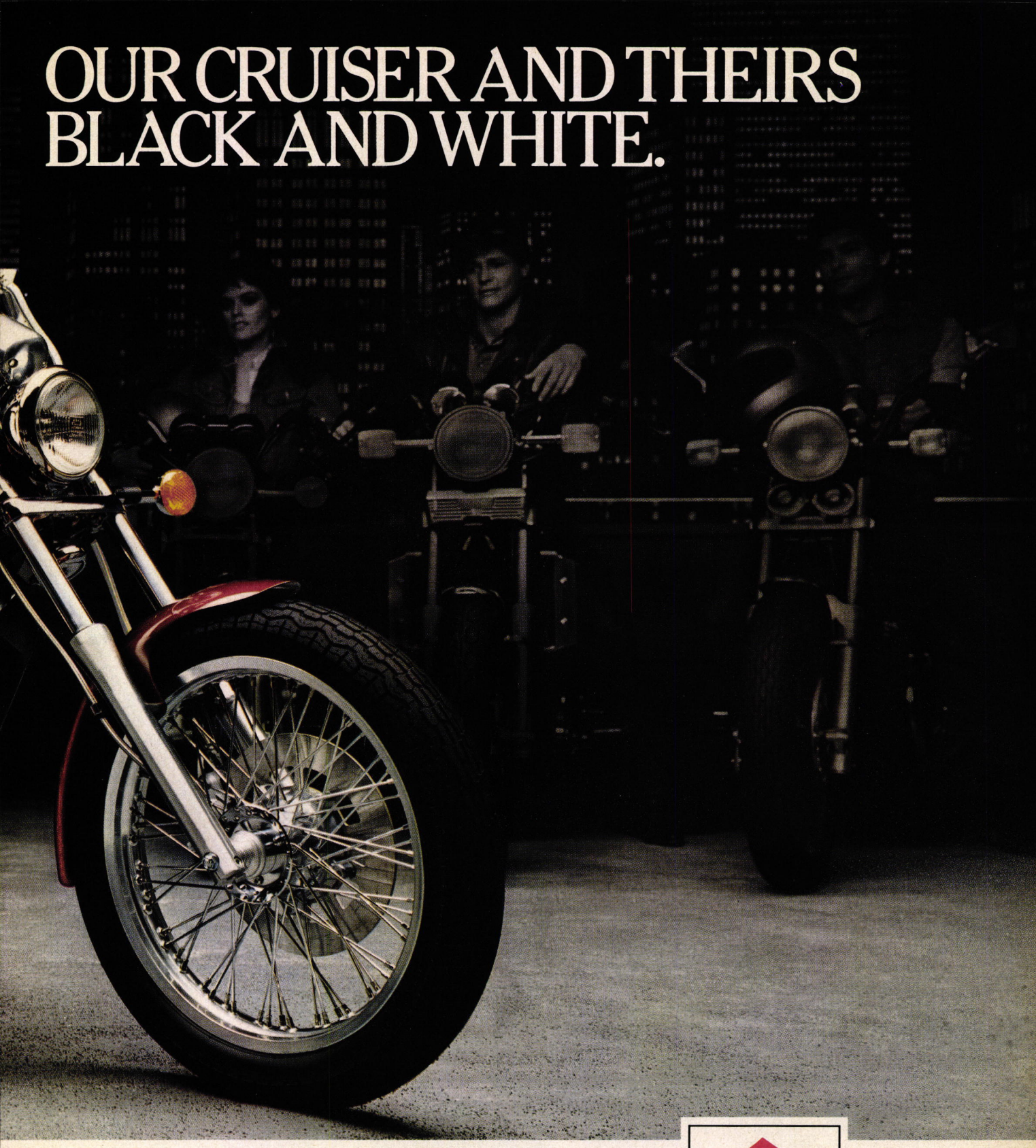

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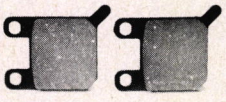

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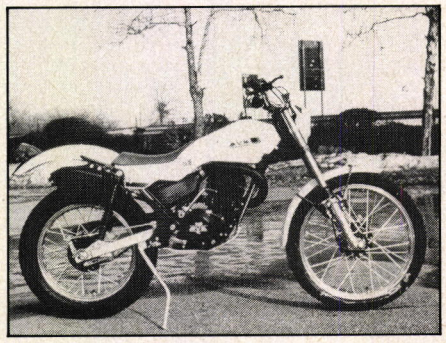
from the CBX's external-reservoir shocks, frame-mount half-fairing and chin cowling, though. Yet underneath the fancy plastic lies the heart of a sensible motorcycle: 254 pounds of urbobike managed through traffic by a six-speed, air-cooled four-stroke single with Honda's Radial Four-Valve Combustion chamber, that helps churn out a claimed 28 horsepower.

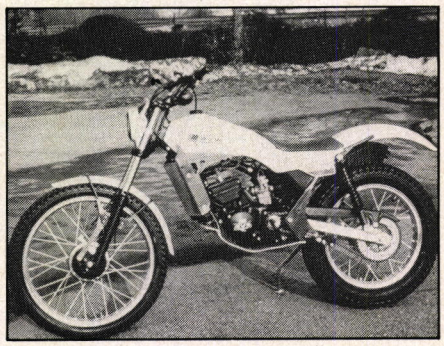
• What's in a name? A new Italian motorcycle company, for one. The name in question is SVM, which stands for Societa Veicola Milanese. The firm was founded by Piero Sironi, former chief of the now-defunct SWM. (SWM was formed from the two principals' surnames, Sironi and Vergani, plus "V" for Vimercate—where they were built—and "M" for Motori. That yielded SVVM, which was written as SWM.)

There's more here than just a new name, though. SVM is producing off-road hardware using air- and liquid-cooled VILLA engines, and both single-shock and dual-shock rear



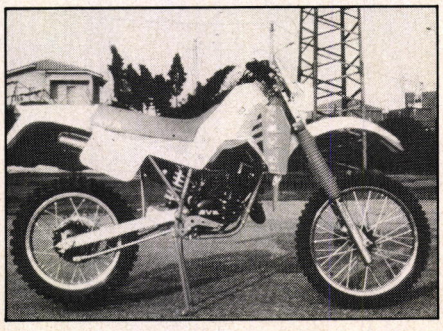
SVM 300 bears a family resemblance

Some say a stepchild of SWM.



New SVM plonker debuts with a splash

Liquid-cooling for the go-slow crowd.



SVM gives birth to a 125 Enduro

Firstborn of a new moto-dynasty?

Continued

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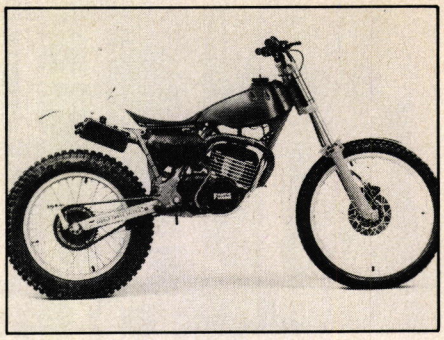

Early reports favor Fantic's Trial 301

Single shock and disc mark new plonker.

ends. And for now, the fledgling firm's production is limited to three models. First is the 125cc Enduro, a single-shock six-speeder claimed to produce 35 horsepower at 11,500 rpm. The Kevlar-tanked 125 gets in the running technologically with variable-advance ignition timing and a system for variable exhaust-port timing, as well.

• Two new trials bikes, a 125 and a 300, also bear the SVM logo—and a distinct similarity to previous SWM trials bikes. Not much is yet known about the two, but they aren't just rehashes; the radiator mounted on the smaller of the two should be ample evidence to the contrary. The SVM name might be new, but don't write off the marque as an insignificant Euro-brand. SWM began challenging the best Europe had to offer only 10 years after its inception, and SVM might well do the same.

• Even if the jury's still out on SVM, the trials continue. Another new candidate in the plonker field is from Fantic, also newly recovered from financial woes. You won't see any signs of business problems in the newest model, though. The Trial 301, with single-shock rear suspension and a Brembo disc front brake, is a break from previous Fantic trials bikes. The six-speed 301 displaces 249.4cc, and is claimed to produce a peak 16.6 horsepower at 5000 rpm—enough, it is said, to propel the sub-190-pound machine to a smidgeon more than 68 mph. Trials isn't about speed, however, and reports from the 1985 Trials Championships are that the Trial 301 has the right kind of slow to be a winner.

• Another firm linked with trials, Betamotor, is trying to become more closely associated with enduro competition. Consequently, Beta has just introduced two new enduro models, the KR250 and 125. Both are single-shock, liquid-cooled two-strokes with reed-valve induction. The two also are alike in suspension, with Marzocchi forks and shocks providing 9.85 inches of wheel travel at each end, and both feature Grimeca front discs and frames built of square-section tubing. The quarter-liter KR has a five-speed transmission, reportedly weighs 229 pounds and tops out at 87 mph. The biggest difference between the two—other than displacement, of course—is that the 125 is said to be 13 pounds lighter and 6 mph slower.

• And for those of you with a taste for memorabilia, Rudge is back in business, though per-

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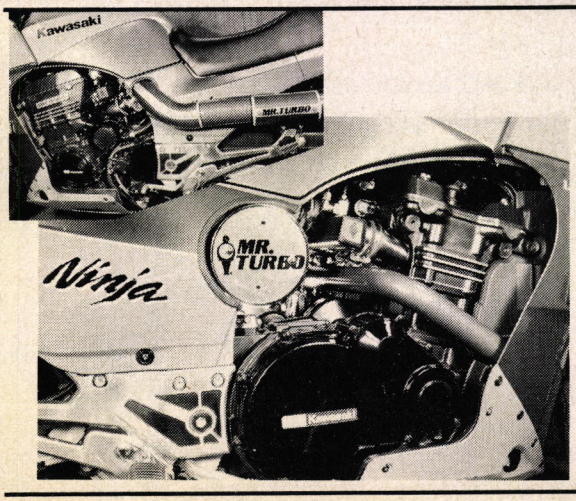

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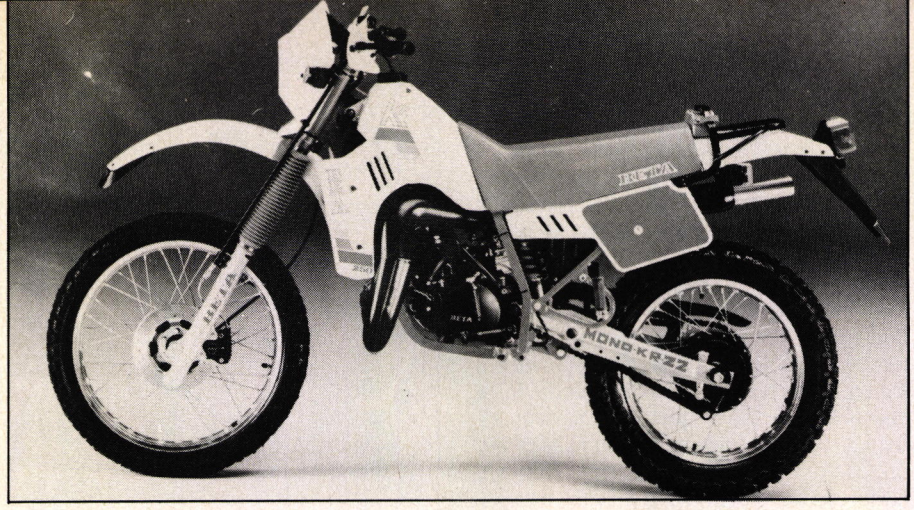

Square-section frame tubes, liquid-cooling and disc brake highlight Beta's KR250

And it's half-size partner, the KR125, as well.

haps in name only. A British businessman purchased all rights to the name a few years ago, and will lend the name to a limited number of 80cc Krauser-Zundapp roadrace machines—10, in fact. At this time, there are reportedly no plans to revive the marque as anything more than an oddity.

• This last item might not qualify for Coming Soon, since it won't happen until 1987 at the earliest. But according to TASS, the official Soviet news agency, the Jupiter 5 will be available for export within two years. This Soviet speedster is an air-cooled 350cc two-stroke twin with more than a passing resemblance to an early Yamaha RD350. If you missed your chance for a simple two-stroke streetbike the first time around, you might get another chance. But don't hold your breath; the Russians might be coming, but not for a few years.

FEDERAL CASES

• The next time you grimace while writing a check for the astronomical figure it takes to insure your literbike, consider this little item: A study conducted by the Traffic Industry Research Foundation of Canada suggests there is no correlation whatsoever between motorcycle engine displacement and frequency of accidents.

• File this under A Rose By Any Other Name. Following negotiations for the past year or so—and a petition filed with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office—American Honda and the Gold Wing Road Riders Association have come to terms over the association's use of "Wing," "Gold Wing" and the Wing emblem. A written agreement between the two parties allows the association to use the disputed words and emblems, while protecting each party's trademark interests.

• If you keep a running count of kudos, you'll want to know that Florida won the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's 1984 State Licensing Award for improvements in the administration of its skill tests for motorcycle licensing.

• Rider education is a popular subject these days, but it isn't limited just to two wheels. A new program being conducted by the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America has 1500 instructors in training, and is expected eventually to provide rider education to an estimated 45,000 ATV riders per year.

• The Double Nickel is another hot topic, and according to the AMA, one that should heat up even further this year. For example, more states have been added to the list we ran last month of the ones reportedly considering bills to repeal or weaken the national speed limit in 1985. The new additions include Colorado Idaho, Louisiana, Montana, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota and Texas.

• Georgia SB151, a voluntary helmet-use bill,

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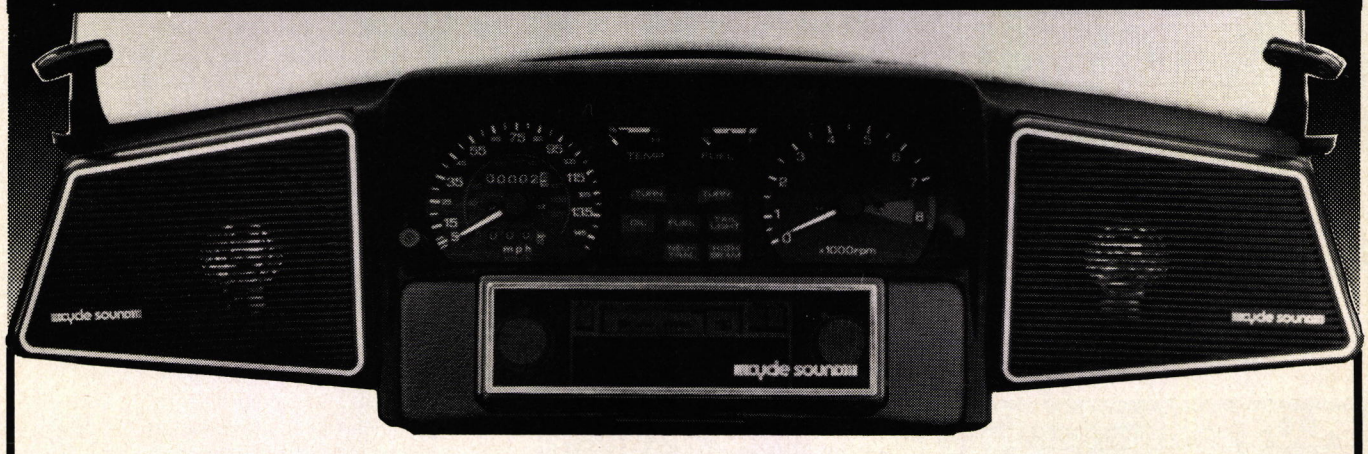
Seeing Is Believing



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reportedly is stalled in that state's Public Safety Committee. Insiders say the measure probably won't be voted on soon, which might work in favor of the bill, because a later vote could give the SB151 a better chance of passage.

• Finally, here's one rider who knows how to make a Federal Case out of his motorcycle. A British rider, who reportedly had enough problems with his KZ1100 Kawasaki to brand it a lemon, finally tired of employing conventional channels to handle the problem. After working through the dealer level and beyond, he finally decided to go straight to the horse's mouth, so to speak. And so, he picketed the Japanese Embassy in London. No word on how his protest is going, though.

HARD CASH

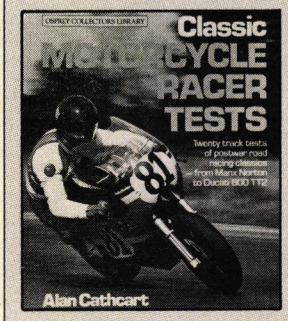
• Apparently, it's possible to Pound motorcycling into the public consciousness. At least, that's the collective opinion of Britain's motorcycle industry, which apparently is willing to back that opinion with hard cash. A 2 million pound advertising campaign reportedly is being undertaken to advertise the positive aspects of riding over those of driving. Jolly good show, no doubt.

• Still on the subject of media blitzes, look for one soon from American Honda. It's no secret that the growing ATV industry has drawn some fire over the question of ATV safety. Honda, however, will be using a series of network television spots and print ads to publicize safety messages in an attempt to change the ATV's image. And the program isn't limited to TV and print media. Honda will circulate a film, "Talkin' ATC Safety," to high schools throughout the country, while a Honda safety spokesman will work the TV and radio talk show circuits. As an adjunct to the plan, safety demonstrations through youth groups and at shopping malls are expected to reach 8 million people directly. The program reportedly will cost $1.7 million over a two-year period.

• Honda's ATV safety program takes on a special importance right now, particularly if a trend is to continue. Because, in case you didn't know, the growth leader in the American transportation industry doesn't have a radio, reclining seats or even a license plate. In terms of growth percentage, you can forget cars, trains, trucks and, unfortunately, motorcycles. The hot item is the all-terrain vehicle. Sales of ATVs reportedly have jumped 600 percent in the past five years.

• Honda's obviously spending a huge chunk of change to promote ATV safety, but it doesn't compare to the $5 million the firm reportedly will spend to advertise its new 250cc Rebel. That's an incredible sum of money to spend touting a single model—especially one that retails for only $1298, but in this case, the long view prevails. According to Honda spokesmen, the Rebel will attract entry-level buyers, and so the corporate ledgers will show $5 million going toward market expansion,

Book Review


OSPREY COLLECTORS LIBRARY
Classic
RACER
TESTS
Twenty track tests of postwar road racing classics — from Manx Norton to Ducati 900 TT2
Alan Cathcart

Classic Motorcycle Racer Tests
by Alan Cathcart
192 pages, $19.95
Osprey Collector's Library
12-14 Long Acre
London, England WC2E9LP-B

• When was the last time someone offered you 20 hot laps on Mike Hailwood's 250 Honda Six? Or, for that matter, when was the last time you tucked behind the bubble of a John Player Norton monocoque for a quick 10 around Donington? Now imagine the chance to put not one, but 20 classic racing motorcycles back on the track one last time.

You'll probably never get that chance; not in this lifetime, anyway. There is an alternative, though. Alan Cathcart's "Classic Motorcycle Racer Tests" offers an inside look at 20 classic racebikes from the '50s to date, with more than 160 black-and-white photos as illustration.

"Tests" is comprised largely of rewritten articles from the British bike magazine "Classic Bike," and therein lies one of its faults: The repetition of formula that would go unnoticed over 20 months seems exaggerated when condensed to 192 pages. Lengthy preambles precede each test, occasionally to the detriment of the test itself; Cathcart seems intent on displaying his warehouse of minutae, even when it compromises the read. As a result, some will feel there's too much history and too little testing.

Parts of the material are fascinating, though, especially that on the flight of MZ's chief development rider Ernst Degner from MZ to Suzuki—with immediate effects on Suzuki's racing two-strokes. But, in backgrounding each bike Cathcart jumps from history to riding impressions to personal asides, and only a determined reader will get the benefit of the author's knowledge.

Yet, depite its uneven pace, parts of "Tests" are not only brilliantly researched but movingly written, too; Cathcart really hits his stride with 250 GP bikes of the '60s. And the point is, flawed or not, "Classic Motorcycle Racer Tests" is a one-of-a kind item. It offers you a chance at those dream rides you'll find nowhere else. *—Larry Works*

not just one model.

• File this item under market expansion, too. If you had mentioned leasing to a motorcycle dealer a few years ago, you'd have gotten little more than a blank stare and the bum's rush from the showroom, but things have changed. Gaines Motorcycle Leasing Corp., a New Jersey-based subsidiary of the Gaines Service Leasing Corp., just announced the 500th dealer to join in a leasing and insurance program for motorcycles and ATVs. The plan, called Easy Lease, began in January, and dealers in 37 states already have joined. And, as mentioned in Guide Lines in March '85, participating dealers can get a qualified buyer computer credit approval for a 48-month payment plan, on the spot. A would-be customer could ride out the same day—with no down payment. If a credit plan like that won't stimulate motorcycle sales, nothing will.

• You say you live out in East Nowhere, Wyoming, with no motorcycle dealer nearby, but you'd still like to buy motorcycle accessories? No problem, at least not if you've got a Sears, Roebuck and Co. catalog store handy. From the breakthrough of offering Diehard batteries for bikes a few years ago, things have come a long way. Sears recently released a 32-page catalog of motorcycle and ATV parts and accessories that covers riding gear, tuneup kits, tires, shocks, touring gear and hop-up parts from 30 name-brand manufacturers, all available through the Sears catalog department. See? Sears *does* have everything.

• The same cannot, however, be said of Ducati Meccanica. The Italian firm declared bankruptcy one year ago, but continued to deliver unsold inventory, and recently began making new models. DM built everything to make those models run except the engines, which were manufactured by Ducati V.M., a separate company. These days, Ducati V.M.'s entire output goes to Cagiva, including the powerplants for the 350 and 650 Alazzurra and the Cagiva 650 Elephant. That somewhat labyrinthine example of Italian corporate structure came to an end, however, when Cagiva recently bought Ducati Meccanica. The purchase is just one step in a larger strategy. Cagiva already manufactures more than 40,000 motorcycles per year, making it the largest moto-manufacturer in Europe. The master plan includes pumping that figure up to 100,000 bikes per year by 1988—and Ducati Meccanica's manufacturing capacity figures into meeting that goal.

• Here's a little side note to the lead item in Coming Soon about Amazonas: The firm reportedly is looking for a funding partner, to help ensure a successful entry into the American market. Any takers?

• Last summer marked the first Freedom Run, an event sponsored in part by Harley-Davidson dealers of Denver, Colorado. The event raised nearly $35,000 for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, and became the largest single money-draw for any motorcycle event in the history of the MDA. This year the Freedom Run is scheduled for June 30, with organizers saying they hope to generate as much as

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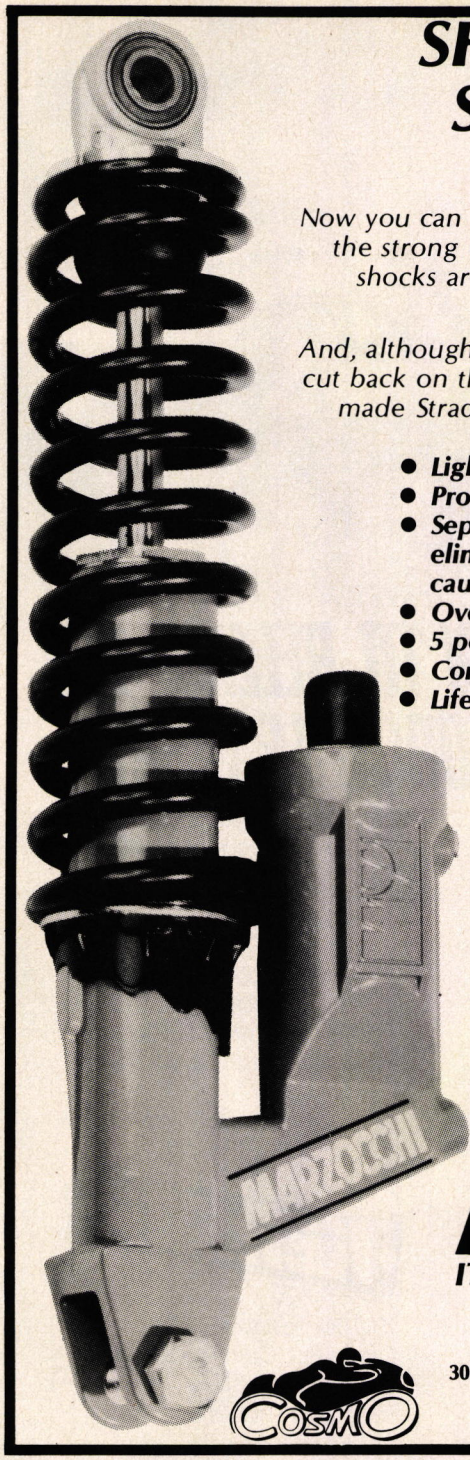

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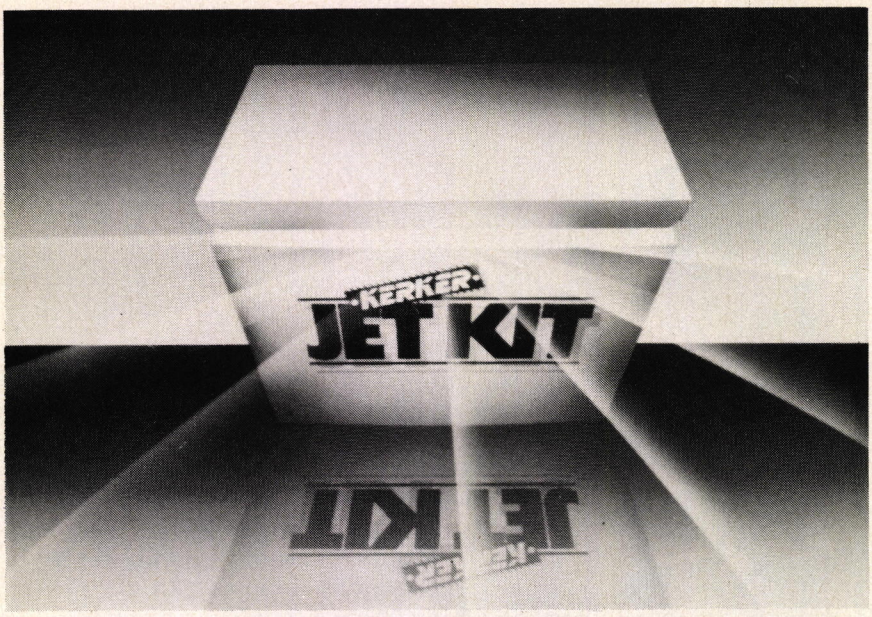

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$250,000. Anything's possible, especially since Malcolm S. Forbes has already accepted an invitation, and there's a chance Willie Nelson will participate, too. You can get more information about the second annual Freedom Run from Freedom Harley-Davidson at (303) 238-0425.

RUMORS

- You've already seen two-, three- and four-wheelers in motorcycle dealerships, but are you ready for even more? Sources in the know suggest the ATV craze is still in its infancy, with wild designs just around the corner. They add that the growing divergence between utility and racing ATVs shortly will yield a *six-wheel* two-seater with some awfully strange equipment for something marketed through motorcycle dealerships: rudders. Finally, they say the project is already on the drawing boards, and could be in dealerships as early as 1986. Anchors aweigh.
- Some of the new middleweight street-burners are little more than box-stock racebikes anyway, so it shouldn't be too surprising if a tidbit of gossip overheard recently turns out to be true. It's reported that one major manufacturer is considering offering a four-wheel option on its latest streetable wrist-rocket. The interesting part is that you don't use all four wheels at once. The option consists of a separate pair of wide cast wheels already fitted with *slicks.*
- There's also talk of a solid connection between Bimota and Ducati. From what our man in Italy reports, Bimota will begin making tuning and speed parts for Ducati engines.
- And if the rumors already circulating about what will be unveiled at the Tokyo Show in October are on the money, you can count on high-tech big-bore street-screamers from at least two manufacturers that will shatter the Double Nickel—and maybe detach riders' retinas—in *first* gear.
- One of those machines might be a Kawasaki, too. With a top speed of 151 mph, the 900 Ninja in this issue is one fast machine, no ifs, ands or buts. But there's talk that the 900 is only a shadow of what it might be. . . . Sources listening at keyholes in Japan report repeated conversations about a 1000 Ninja for the U.S. market in the near future—the very near future. And coupled with that hush-hush discussion is mention of a 168-mph top speed and a quarter-mile time somewhere in the 10.3s. Bold talk, but the proof's not here—yet.

APART FROM THE CROWD

- Plenty of hard-line Harley riders will tell you that Milwaukee-made motorcycles have always come with the proper standard equipment, and that nothing else is necessary.

UNION MADE

Beware of vee-twin imitators

Look for the union label.

They might be right, but Harley officials have seen fit to add one new item, ostensibly to differentiate between Harley-Davidsons and other bikes of U.S. manufacture. You won't find it on any of the Hondas built in Ohio, or on the Kawasakis coming out of Kawasaki's Lincoln, Nebraska, plant. The item in question is a small label, affixed to the right-side downtube, just below the steering head of each new Harley rolling off the assembly line. It indicates the Allied Industrial Workers of America and the International Association of Machinists have put their collective stamp of approval on the bike's manufacture. Harley spokesmen report that the labels have nothing to do with contract negotiations with the unions, rather that they simply indicate a spirit of cooperation between the unions and H-D. So if you're confused by the growing number of cruiserbikes and vee-twins, there's a simple way to tell the Real Steel from the pretenders: Look for the Union Label.

• In one last item about Amazonas, there's the story of a collision between one of the behemobikes and a Volkswagen Golf on the streets of São Paulo, Brazil. Reportedly, it was a typical accident wherein a car turned in front of the bike. At least, it was typical up to a point. When the dust had settled and all the police reports had been filled out, only one of the two vehicles made it away under its own power. It wasn't the car.

• Dateline, Slogan City: To make sure its theme of continuing rider education isn't lost on experienced riders, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation has coined a new motto: "The more you know, the better it gets." True enough, but the MSF's other new slogan—designed to promote helmet usage—likely will be more widely remembered: "Get It On!" Many riders probably would like to do just that.

• Noisemaking by the fans has been as much a part of motorcycle racing as the smell of burning oil, but the cheers generated by the crowd at an event scheduled for May 18-19 at a British track should set new highs. At least, that's what promoters there hope. They've contacted the Guinness Book of Records, and hope to set a record for the loudest shout. Loud-mouthed ringers reportedly have been sought, and volume records for individual males, females and teams are the targets. Promoters say they've already lined up someone who can break the 120-decibel record set by a woman three years ago. It all should make for a world-class cheering section. •

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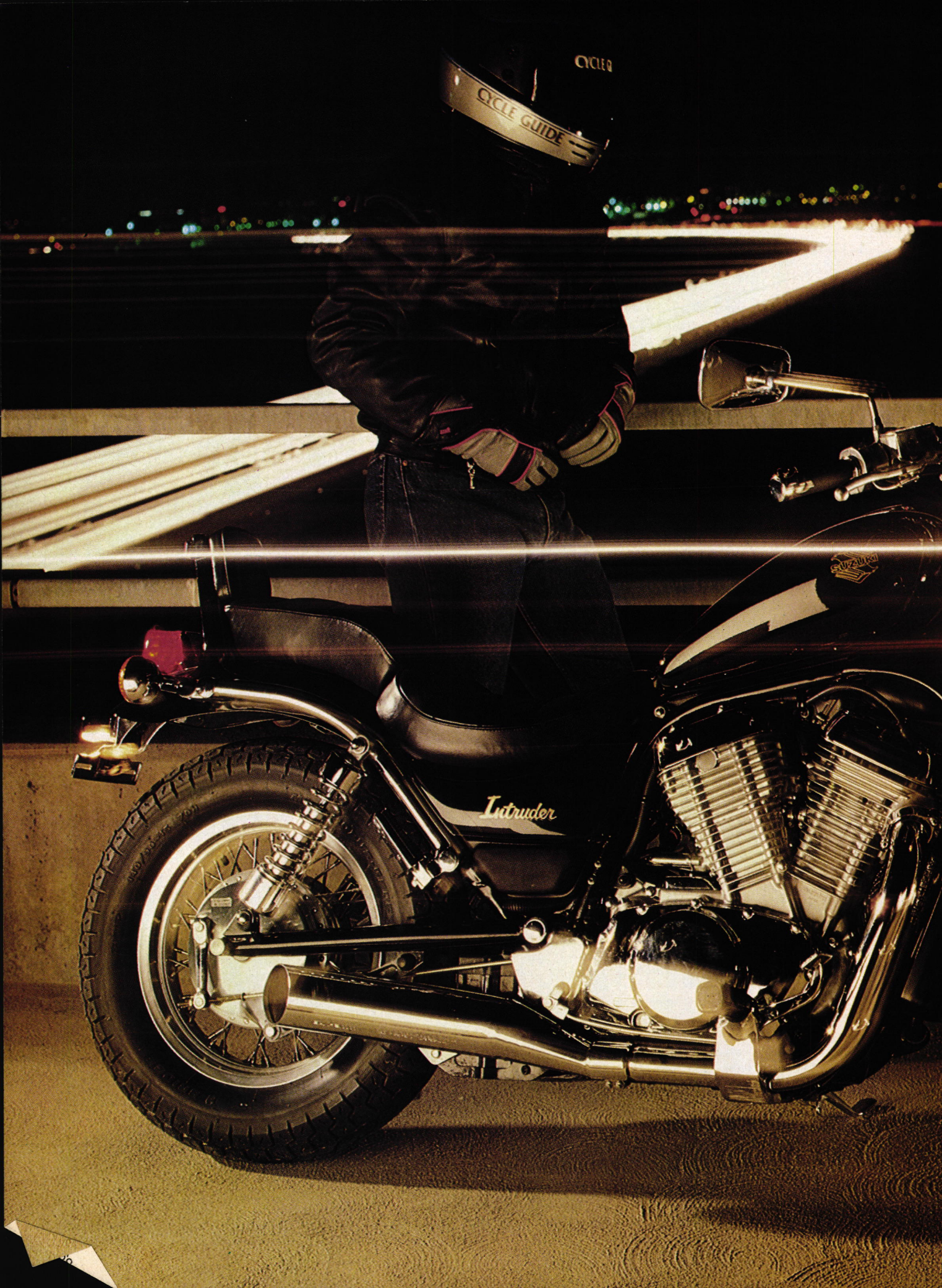

CYCLE
CYCLE GUIDE
SUZUKI
Intruder

ROAD TEST:

Suzuki VS700GLF Intruder

Rolling proof that looks do count . . . for everything.

BY MARC COOK

Despite what you might think, Suzuki hasn't just been sitting on it's hands in respect to the vee-twin cruiser market. Sure, the firm is the last of the Japanese manufacturers to release a vee-twin cruiser, but there's an elegantly simple strategy behind the delay. By having all the other cruiservees in front of them, Suzuki's designers could scrutinize those bikes and use them as examples. In addition, the waiting game allowed Suzuki the luxury of making its entry visually unique in a market where models are as similar as curd in cottage cheese.

Where the Intruder is concerned, that time was well spent. Its lines are long and lean—just the ticket for a cruiservee—and there's enough chrome and polished metal on the bike to make sunglasses almost mandatory on bright days. Chrome alone won't make a motorcycle leap out of the cruiservee background, though, so Suzuki's designers took another route. Their goal for the Intruder focused sharply on another thought: simplicity—even more so than is the case with other cruiservees. And it's for that reason the bike's instruments consist only of a speedometer, odometer and a smattering of warning lights. Other amenities found on the competition's cruiservees were sliced from the roster, too, such as a centerstand and air and damping adjustments for the suspension.

But there's one thing a cruiser absolutely *has* to have—especially one competing in the hotly contested vee-twin arena. It needs a thundering, tractable powerplant, and in that respect, the Intruder shines nearly as brightly as its bodywork. The vee-twin engine produces enough raw torque at all rpm to make the lack of a tachometer almost seem reasonable. Plus, the requisite staggered vee-twin cadence erupts from the 699cc powerplant with booming authority. So convincing is the engine's exhaust note that it's easy to be lulled into thinking there's one of Milwaukee's finest tucked under the teardrop tank.

Continued

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1985 DAVID DEWHURST

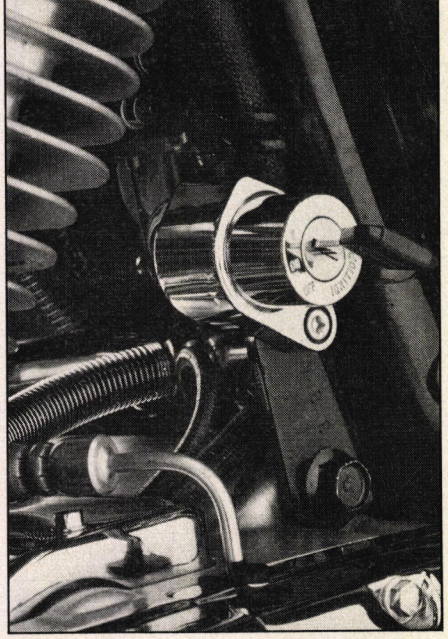
Emulating one of Milwaukee's Twins wasn't the Intruder's sole mission, however. In fact, that happened more as a matter of course than by intent, because Suzuki looked past H-Ds as role models, and instead asked American riders directly what they wanted in a cruiser. Other manufacturers have done that before, but Suzuki took the idea one step further: After penning the bike's shape, the six-member design staff constructed a wood-and-clay model and airfreighted it to Suzuki in Japan. Attached to the model was an adamant message: Make the bike work without altering the styling.

What came back from the factory only a few months later astounded the stateside designers. The running prototype was so close in every detail that it appeared as if some engineer had simply waved a magic wand over the model and created a working motorcycle. The fact that Suzuki's engineers performed such magic hinged on a singular design philosophy: Put the style of the Intruder before function. So rather than design the running gear first, and hang cruiser-style bodywork on later, Suzuki started with the bodywork and basic configuration, and made the hardware work.

Despite those design parameters, the Intruder's eight-valve, liquid-cooled engine performs quite well, never letting on that many of its features are present to accommodate the bike's style. For example, a 45 degree cylinder spread was mandatory, because Americans thought that configuration looked best. From there, the engineers offset the crankpins 45 degrees from each other, which Suzuki claims allows better control of the crankshaft's centrifugal mass than would a single-throw crank, and so helps reduce vibration. That might be the case, but the crankpins' side-to-side offset creates a rocking couple, which manifests itself as vibration in the bar and pegs at all engine speeds, despite the Intruder's rubber engine mounts. Even so, the vibration does little more than provide a pleasing reminder that there's a pair of fist-sized pistons at work beneath the cylinders' diminutive cooling fins.

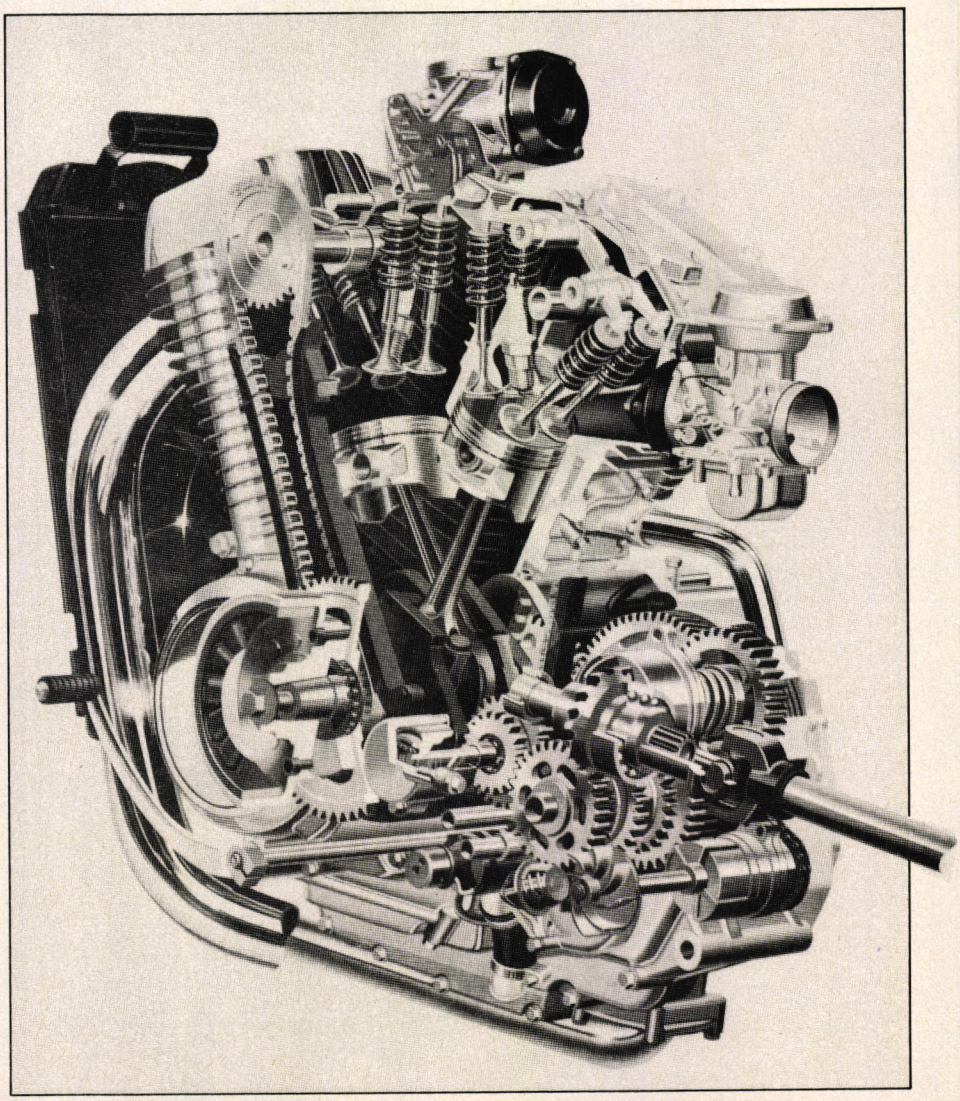
The Intruder's 45 degree cylinder spread and crankpin arrangement are responsible for more than just the quality of the bike's vibration, though. A rhythmic exhaust note is considered obligatory for a cruiservee, and Suzuki's design ensures the motor has just the right sound. With the Intruder, the No.1 cylinder (rear) fires first, No.2 fires a long 450 degrees later, and then No.1 fires again after only 270 degrees. That firing order creates the engine's loping exhaust beat and, Suzuki claims, benefits torque output as well. The engine's performance bears out that claim, too: Rolling the throttle on—even from just above idle—reveals the motor's willingness to churn out power from basement-level rpm, with nary a cough or hesitation from the pair of 34mm Mikuni carbs.

Part of the Intruder's enthusiasm for low-speed work stems from its closely spaced gear ratios. Indeed, you can chug down Main Street with the five-speed transmission in either of its two upper cogs, without complaint from the engine. And the progressive engagement of the hydraulically actuated clutch makes stoplight getaways smooth affairs. The rest of the drivetrain helps in that respect, too; the shaft final drive is wonderfully tight and lash-free, and the gearbox shifts well, too. Only the transmission's occasional reluctance to perform quick



Ignition switch placed behind cylinder

A touch keyed to Harley styling.



Vee-twin engine hides its heritage behind chrome plating and miniature cylinder fins

Japanese in design, but pure American in character and style.

downshifts mars the drivetrain's otherwise good performance.

In order to keep the Intruder's engine temperature down during torrid stoplight-to-stoplight endeavors, the bike employs an unusual combination of both liquid-cooling and air-cooling. And the reason behind the hybrid cooling system is—once again—style. Suzuki engineers wanted the Intruder to reap the benefits of liquid-cooling, but they also wanted a clean, uncluttered appearance for the motor, and they wanted it to *look* air-cooled, an important consideration in the cruiservee class. Consequently, they endowed the bike with an unobtrusive small-capacity radiator (1.8 quarts), then carefully hid the external plumbing and gave the engine full cylinder finning. The fins are more than just a cosmetic device, then; they provide about one-third of the system's cooling capacity.

Likewise, styling considerations also affected the placement of the Intruder's shaft drive. From the beginning, the stylists wanted an exceptionally narrow motorcycle, and one way to achieve that was to place the shaft and swingarm *outboard* of the swingarm pivot. Without frame tubes running outside the swingarm, that area could be made extremely narrow. And the gambit worked; the Intruder's amidships are remarkably skinny.

Suzuki didn't just want a narrow motorcycle, though; it's equally as important—if not more so—for a cruiservee to be *low*. To that end, the backbone tubes of the mild steel frame run close to the top-end of the motor, making for a low-mounted fuel tank. Additionally, Suzuki placed the Intruder's battery *underneath* the swingarm. That allows the seat rails to be exceptionally low, with a correspondingly low seat height. That maneuver forced a compromise, though, because the battery fills the space normally occupied by a centerstand. Consequently, the Intruder has to do without.

Suzuki's quest for a low seat height forced yet another, more serious compromise on the Intruder: limited suspension travel. Up front, the non-adjustable fork strokes through only 4.9 inches, and uses stiff springs to compensate for its lack of travel. The stiff springs allow the fork to work reasonably well over large, rolling bumps, but smaller irregularities pound right through. That trait is especially annoying on expansion joints, where the Intruder hobbyhorses constantly, especially surprising considering its long 61.7-inch wheelbase. And the rear suspension is similarly limited in travel—a mere 2.9 inches—and compliance. Plus, the shocks are slightly undersprung, requiring spring preload to be set to its No.4 position (of five) to keep the rear of the bike from bottoming frequently.

Those suspension and frame concessions—along with a thinly padded saddle—gave Suzuki precisely what it wanted, too: The Intruder has a base-

Continued

Suzuki's late entry into the cruiservee class allowed the Intruder to be visually unique in a market where models are as similar as curd in cottage cheese.

ment-level 27.2-inch seat height—more than 1 inch lower than Harley's FXRS Low Glide. Further, that seat height complements the forward-mounted footpegs and low, flat drag-style bar. And if the drag bar isn't *your* style, Suzuki offers an optional, traditional pullback bar at no extra cost. With the lower bar, though, the Intruder offers up the best riding position of any cruiserbike this side of Yamaha's Maxim X, one of the best in the business. The Intruder's ergonomics allow the rider to put more weight on his hands and feet than is the case with most other cruisers, and that helps take some of the sting out of the Intruder's thin, hard saddle.

That seating position also allows the Intruder to excel as a urban prowler. There, the Suzuki works marvelously; it feels lighter than its 442 pounds, and the low seat height and well-placed footpegs make the bike superb for that kind of work. In addition, the engine's bottomless torque, seamless carburetion and tight driveline combine to make the Intruder a pure pleasure to ride in the city.

The only glitch in the bike's in-town composure has to do with its steering; the Intruder has a tendency to fall into a turn at low speeds. Above 20 mph, though, the tendency goes away completely. And, overall, the Intruder has the right mix of power, ergonomics and handling to put it near the top of the cruiservee list.

On the highway, though, the bike doesn't fare nearly as well. The engine feels busy and overworked at speeds beyond 60 mph, and the same vibration that soothes you down a city block becomes downright annoying on the Superslab. Plus, the harsh suspension and thin saddle conspire to make the bike uncomfortable long before you have to switch the chromed petcock to reserve. To its credit, the Intruder's long wheelbase and raked-out steering geometry—with a 33.25 steering head angle and a whopping 5.63 inches of trail—provide good straight-line stability and make the bike all but immune to crosswinds.

The Intruder seems even more out of place on a twisty mountain road. Although the bike responds remarkably quickly to inputs through the handlebar, those inputs require some muscle. That's the least of the Suzuki's backroad shortcomings, though; the chromed peg carriers limit cornering clearance, and drag soon after the pegs do. Back the pace down, though, and the bike acquits itself fairly well. The torquey engine allows satisfying drives out of corners, and the single front disc brake offers good stopping power. However, that binder also lacks feel and requires a firm grip to work it to maximum effect. The non-floating rear drum brake isn't nearly as good, offering imprecise feedback that can lead to lockup, which then chatters the rear wheel off-line.

It's precisely those kinds of limitations—outside of the Intruder's urban stomping grounds—that point up the bike's narrow focus, and it's a specialization shared by nearly all the current cruiservees. With the Intruder, though, that specialization has reached a new extreme. The bike is so thoroughly styled and conceptualized that some functional considerations got lost in the shuffle, such as the trade-off of suspension travel and compliance for a low seat height.

But because Suzuki—and, in fact, almost all the manufacturers—believe that riders interested in the cruiservee market consider aesthetics first, the Intruder's shortcomings aren't serious enough to dull the gleam of its chrome, or soften its urban focus. For those riders, the Intruder possesses more of that unmistakable American flair and feel than any of its Japanese competition. And while that strong emphasis on all-American style is the Intruder's biggest stumbling block, it's also its biggest asset. •

Nits:

- Ignition switch is awkwardly placed.
- Fork lock is separate from ignition switch.
- No tripmeter.

Picks:

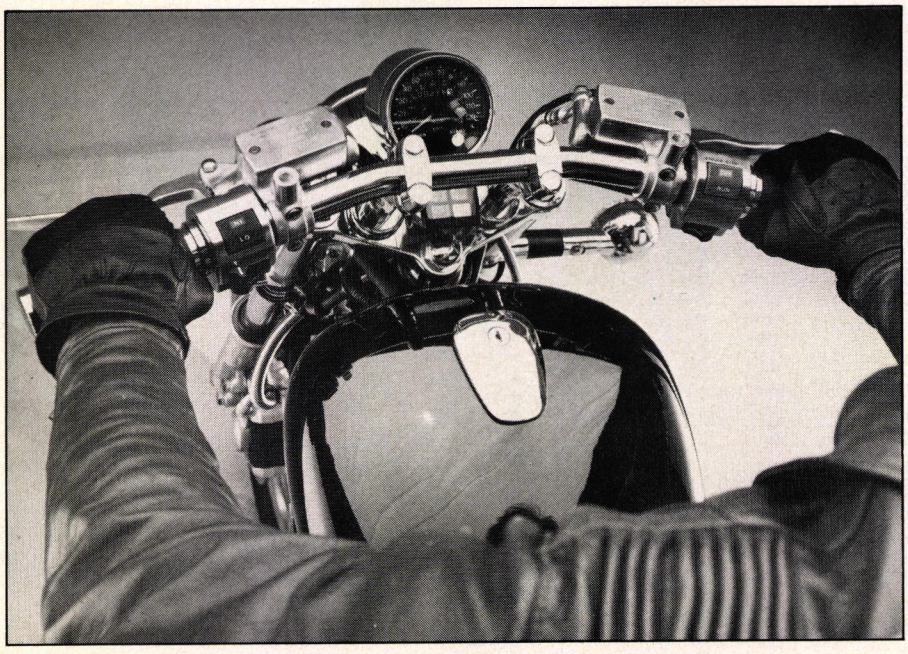
- Fuel petcock conveniently placed.

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make and Model	Quarter-Mile, sec/mph	Top Speed, mph	Weight, lbs.	Stopping Distance From 60 mph, ft.
Suzuki VS700GLF Intruder-'85	12.998/101.01	112	442	132
Harley-Davidson XLH Sportster-'85	13.742/95.94	111	490	146
Honda VT1100C Shadow-'85	13.022/100.33	112	560	127
Harley-Davidson FXRS Low Glide-'84	13.917/94.57	112	575	140
Honda VT750C Shadow-'83	12.906/100.78	127	484	132
Yamaha XV920 Virago-'83	12.835/101.46	108	503	138

Engine features four-valve heads, shaft drive, liquid-cooling and offset crankpins

Modern solutions provide traditional results.



Intruder shows off its flat bar, rubber-mounted risers and polished switch clusters

Shining examples of attention to detail and adherence to an American profile.

Ride Review

• Over the past couple of years, the term "custom"—particularly when applied to a vee-twin—has become a euphemism for a Harley-Davidson clone. So when the Intruder was scheduled to show up on our doorstep, I thought I knew what to expect—yet another tasteless high-tech Japanese FXRS done up in black and red, or black and silver, or black, silver and red, with an apehanger handlebar, pseudo sissy bar and some form of screaming chicken splattered on the side of the tank.

What I didn't expect was a near-perfect copy of Dennis Hopper's panhead chopper from "Easy Rider," tastefully done in black and chrome. By God, I thought, this really is a *custom*—one that does justice to the term. It looks like *one* person built this bike. And, yes, I realize there's nothing *that* original about the style, but at least this guy has taste. —*Jim Miller*

• My hat's off to Suzuki. In a class where the motorcycles are about as distinctive as tweedledum and tweedledee, the Intruder's styling makes it a standout. And that motor; not only is its character *right,* but it can kill most other vee-twins in a contest of speed.

Just the same, though, this hawg-let doesn't get my squeal of approval. That's because, like the Katana, another Suzuki styling exercise, the VS's looks intrude—pardon—on how the bike works. And the most glaring example is the Intruder's ride quality. In its headlong rush to endow the bike with a remarkably low seat height, Suzuki shortchanged the VS on suspension travel, seat padding and, ultimately, comfort. But don't get me wrong. I still like the Intruder. I just want a little more of it, that's all. —*Charles Everitt*

• You don't have to fire up the Intruder's thundering 45 degree vee-twin engine to know that Suzuki understands what Americans want in custom motorcycles. Simply put, the Intruder is a stunner; it looks as if it just rolled out of a Northern California custom bike shop. Peel off the Suzuki emblems, and I'd swear Arlen Ness, one of America's better-known builders of Harley-Davidson customs, had a hand in designing this motorcycle.

Suzuki hasn't completely rewritten the book on custom styling with the Intruder, though, just underlined some of the finer points. And a few people in Milwaukee might want to examine those points more closely. In the meantime, I'll raise a can of Pabst, and toast Suzuki's Intruder: Here's to one fine custom, one that was brewed in America and built in Japan. —*Dain Gingerelli*

Continued

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Suzuki VS700GLF Intruder — street

IMPORTER: U.S. Suzuki Motor Corp., 3251 E. Imperial Highway, Brea, California 92621

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $3199

ENGINE

Type . . . . . liquid-cooled four-stroke 45 degree tandem vee-twin
Valve arrangement . . . . . single overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke . . . . . 80.0mm x 69.6mm
Displacement 699.7cc
Compression ratio 10.0:1
Engine redline . . . . . 8000 rpm
Carburetion . . . . . two 34mm Mikuni constant-vacuum
Air filter . . . . . dual disposable paper elements
Lubrication . . . . . wet sump
Starting system . . . . . electric only
Ignition . . . . . transistorized breakerless
Charging system . . . . . 12-volt; 350-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 16-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive . . . . . helical gears; 1.690:1 ratio
Clutch . . . . . wet, multi-plate
Transmission-to-jackshaft drive . . . . . straight-cut gears; 1.000:1 ratio
Jackshaft-to-driveshaft drive . . . . . spiral-bevel gears; 1.133:1 ratio
Driveshaft-to-rear-wheel drive . . . . . spiral-bevel gears; 3.091:1 ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.286	13.536	5.44
II	1.632	9.662	7.62
III	1.227	7.268	10.13
IV	1.000	5.923	12.43
V	0.852	5.044	14.59

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . . . Kayaba, 37mm stanchion tube diameter/ 4.9 in. (124mm)
Rear . . . . . dual Kayaba shocks, 5-position adjustable spring preload/2.9 in. (73mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . double-action hydraulic caliper, 11.7-in. (296mm) effective disc diameter
Rear . . . . . drum, single leading shoe, rod-operated

TIRES

Front . . . . . 100/90-19 57H Bridgestone Mag Mopus-L303
Rear . . . . . 140/90-15 70H Bridgestone Mag Mopus-G508

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

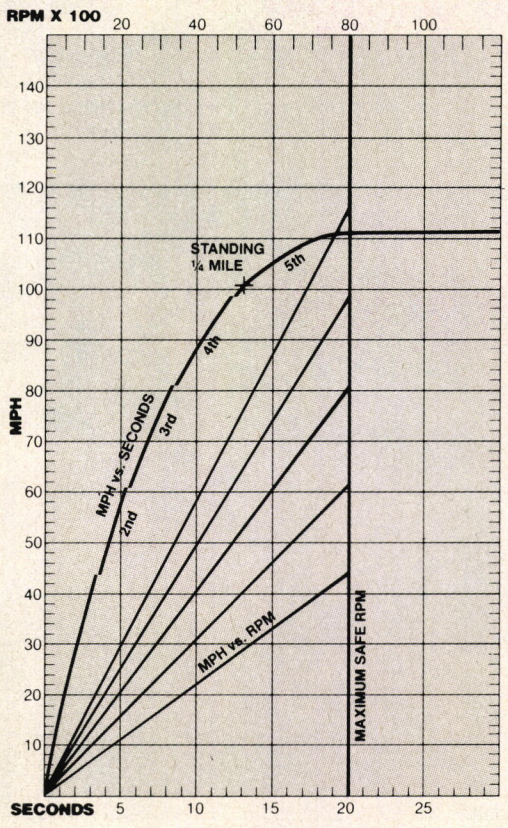
Weight . . . . . 442 lbs. (200.5kg)
Weight distribution . . . . . 44.1% front, 55.9% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) . . . . . 950 lbs. (430.9kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) . . . . . 488 lbs. (221.3kg)
Wheelbase . . . . . 61.7 in. (1567mm)
Seat height . . . . . 27.2 in. (690mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . 26.2 in. (665mm)
Footpeg height . . . . . 11.5 in. (291mm)
Ground clearance . . . . . 5.0 in. (127mm), at footpeg carrier
Steering head angle . . . . . 33.25 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . 5.63 in. (143mm)
Frame . . . . . tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity . . . . . 2.5 qt. (2.4/)
Fuel tank . . . . . steel, 3.2 gal. (12.0/), including 0.8 gal. (3.0/) reserve
Instrumentation . . . . . speedometer, odometer

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range . . . . . 44 to 63 mpg (19 to 27 km/l)
Average fuel consumption . . . . . 52 mpg (22 km/l)
Cruising range, maximum . . . . . 141 to 202 miles (227 to 324km)
Cruising range, reserve only . . . . . 35 to 50 miles (57 to 81km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated . . . . . 31 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated . . . . . 55 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration . . . . . 12.998 sec., 101.01 mph (163 kph)
Top speed (observed) . . . . . 112 mph (180 kph)
Stopping distance from 30 mph . . . . . 31 ft. (9.4m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph . . . . . 132 ft. (40.2m)

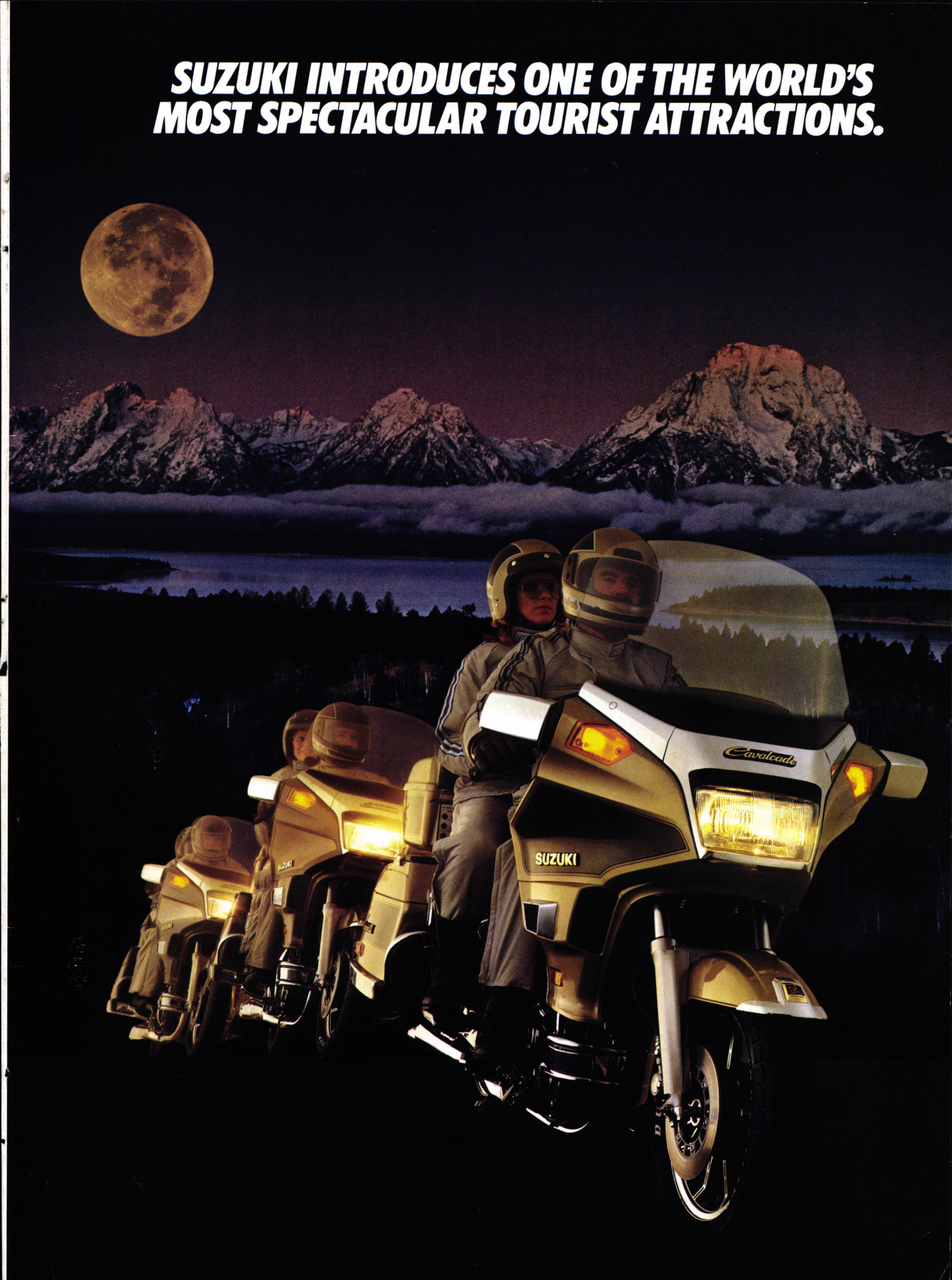
WARRANTY: 12 months, unlimited mileage

AVAILABLE COLORS: Black; Metallic Maroon

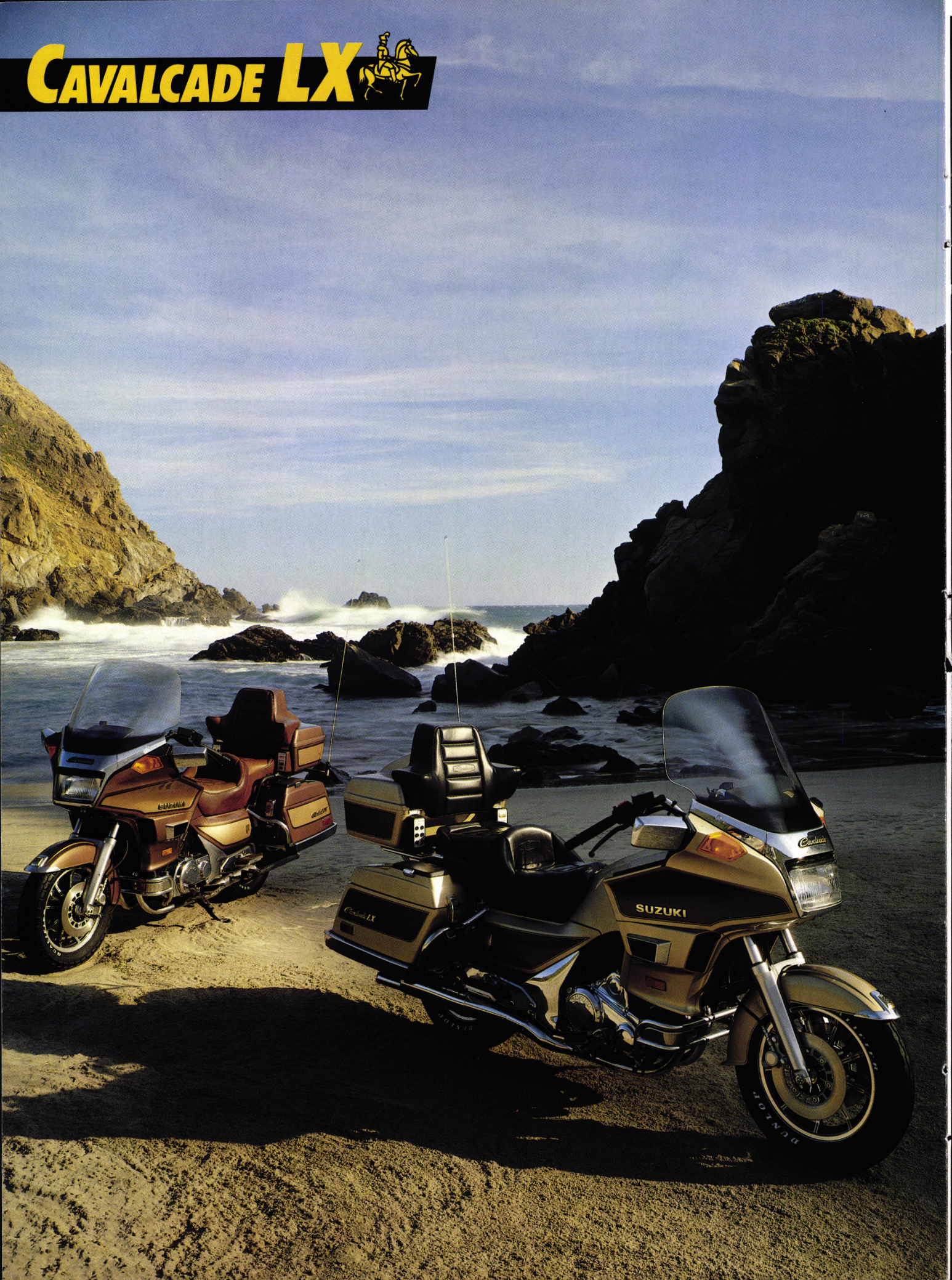


All weight and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

SUZUKI INTRODUCES ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST SPECTACULAR TOURIST ATTRACTIONS.



CAVALCADE LX



THE CAVALCADE 1400 GD & GT. CREATED FOR RIDERS WHO JUST DON'T KNOW WHEN TO QUIT.

The Suzuki Cavalcade was designed for riders who measure the length of their trip by the day, not by the mile. It's the first luxury tourer designed and built around a very simple concept: Touring should be as much fun for the co-rider as it is for the rider. It should be just as comfortable, just as convenient, just as much fun. On the new Suzuki Cavalcade, it is. Because no other touring motorcycle has ever been as thoroughly designed, extensively tested and built for comfort as the new Cavalcade GV1400GT and GV1400GD LX.

Extensive ergonomic research led Suzuki to create a series of important innovations. Breakthroughs like Suzuki's orthopedically-designed Air Cushion system which features inflatable air bags within the co-rider's seat and backrest. The button-activated controls allow the co-rider to inflate and deflate the air bags to alter posture and pressure. The side-bolstered, sliding adjustable backrest is designed to maintain an ideal S-curve spinal position with the air bags deflated. Before the onset of fatigue, the co-rider can inflate the air bags to alter spinal support and pressure points on the hips. The entire system minimizes back and hip fatigue to provide a true milestone in motorcycle touring comfort.

There's a new "Auto-Levelling System" with pre-programmed settings for normal motorcycle ride height. When activated, the computer triggers the on-board air compressor to automatically adjust pressure in the pneumatic rear shocks for ideal ride height.

Then there's Suzuki's Computerized Cruise Control with resume function that allows the rider to resume the previously set speed, even if the cruise mode has been cancelled. The rider can also negotiate temporary situations by accelerating or decelerating within the system's parameters, and not have to leave cruise control mode or reset the entire system. The system is operational in fifth gear between 35-85 mph and utilizes a motorized activator for precise settings.

When the miles call for music, tune in with the LX's special sound system. It's got AM/FM stereo, auto-reverse cassette, program change, metal tape compatibility, digital audio displays, intercom capability (headset and wires optional), CB compatibility (CB optional), automatic volume control, handlebar-mounted controls for AM/FM stereo tuning and for all volumes.

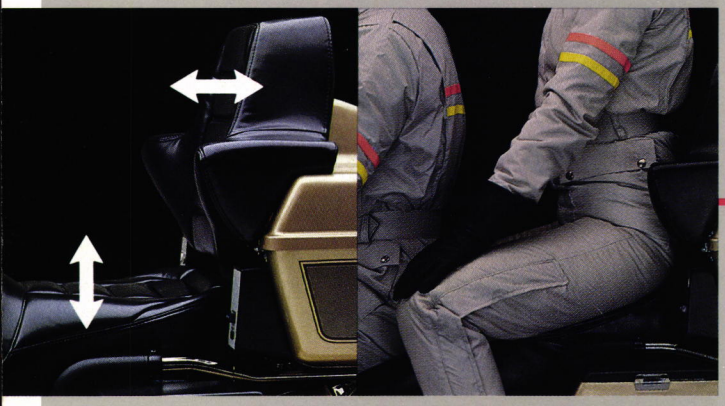
Luxury Touring requires Luxury Power. Smooth, 82° V-4 power that pulls hard when and where you need it. And the Cavalcade has it BIG! 1,360cc's big. With liquid cooling, DOHC, 16 valves, and Twin Swirl Combustion Chambers (TSCC) that deliver the easy-passing and hill-flattening power you demand. Other features include maintenance-free transistorized ignition. An adjustment-free hydraulic clutch. Silent cam chains with automatic tensioner. And hydraulic lift valve adjusters that reduce routine maintenance.

To deliver all this power, the Cavalcade sports a tough five-speed transmission and low-maintenance, highly dependable shaft drive for smooth performance. And to help keep it all in contact with the road, smooth air front forks and plush, air-adjustable dual rear shocks.

The new Suzuki Cavalcade and Cavalcade LX. The luxury turn-key tourers for everybody who loves to go two-up on the open road. For riders and co-riders who want to pack up everything they need and ride until the map runs out. If that's your idea of a good time, then you've just found your motorcycle.

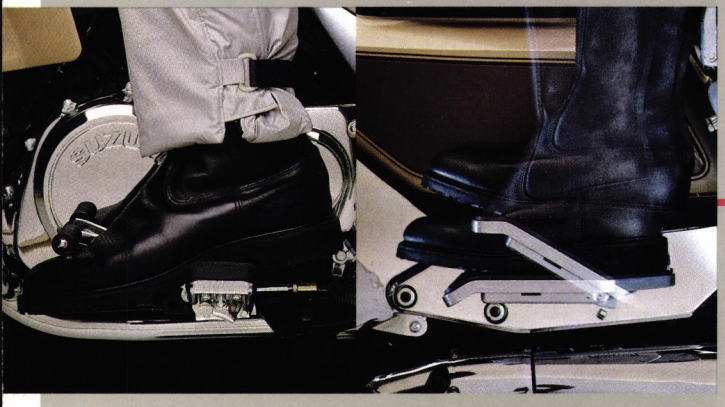
DESIGNED TO FIT AROUND
INSTEAD OF THE OT

Even fully supported and in the ideal spinal posture, some back fatigue may eventually set in. To combat this, the co-rider's backrest adjusts to four different support positions.



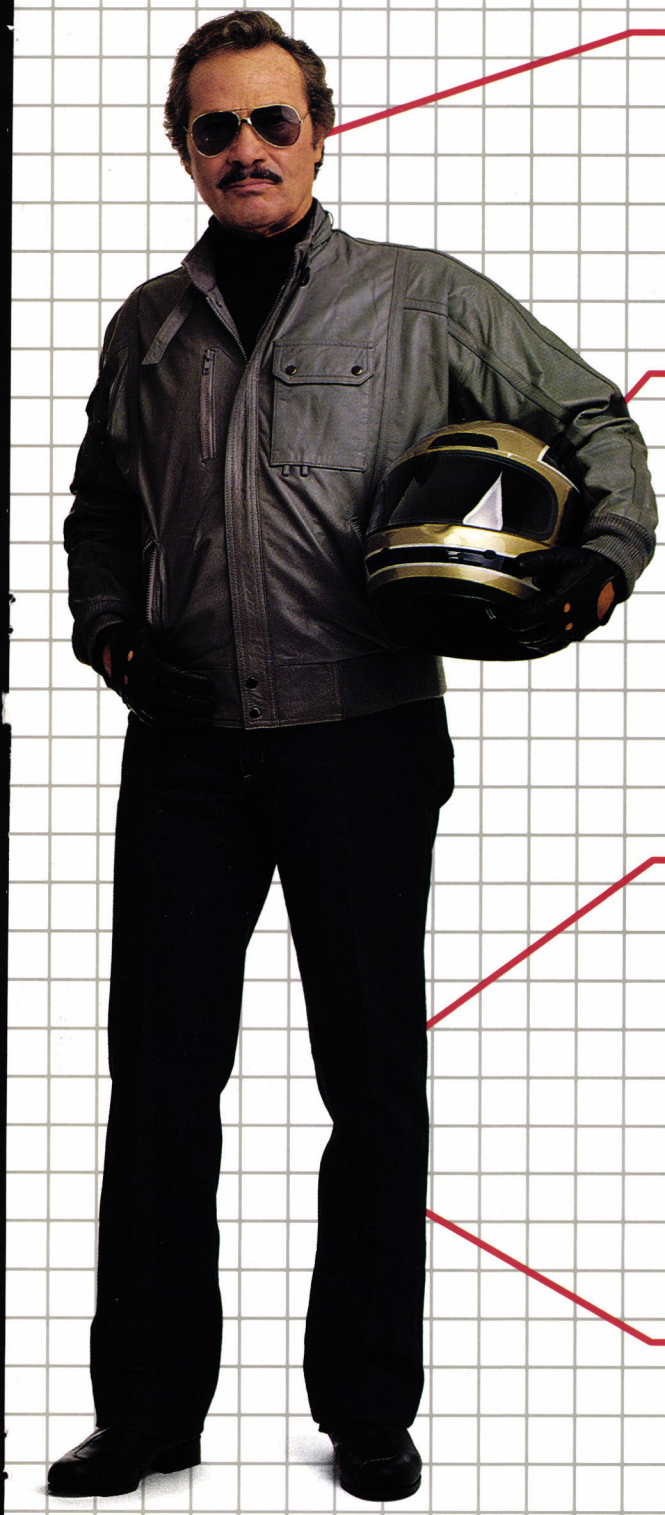
The Air Cushion System adjusts spinal posture and pressure points on the hips. The co-rider activates it by pushing one of the "IN" (inflate) buttons. Similarly, pushing an "OUT" button deflates the air cushions.

With the LX's sound system, the co-rider has separate controls for AM/FM stereo tuning as well as for all music, intercom (optional) and CB (optional) volumes.



The Cavalcade LX sports adjustable co-rider footboards to help resist leg and upper thigh fatigue. Rider footpegs can be pre-set to any one of three convenient positions.

YOU AND YOUR CO-RIDER. HER WAY AROUND.



The design of the LX's fairing/windshield helps shield riders from rain at cruising speeds and minimizes wind noise. Fairing vents allow rider to use engine heat in cold weather.

The fully-instrumented cockpit informs you of most major mechanical functions. Note the handlebar-mounted controls for the stereo, cruise control and optional intercom and CB.

The Cavalcades' low-slung seat design delivers exceptional straddling control and comfort. Narrow design of V-4 engine means more rider leg room at a full stop.

Suzuki's pneumatically-controlled "Auto-Levelling System" provides automatic adjustment of vehicle's ride height to compensate for variations in vehicle payload.

When a machine is built to travel as far as the Suzuki Cavalcade, it had better be able to carry what you'll need for the trip. And the Cavalcade can! With the largest combined storage capacity of any production machine.

The travel trunk has an extremely large capacity and a handy light and vanity mirror. And the saddlebags likewise carry a great deal of cargo. Each saddlebag features a convenient storage compartment on top for easy co-rider access while cruising. And the travel trunk and saddlebags all feature removeable liners for easy retrieval of cargo.

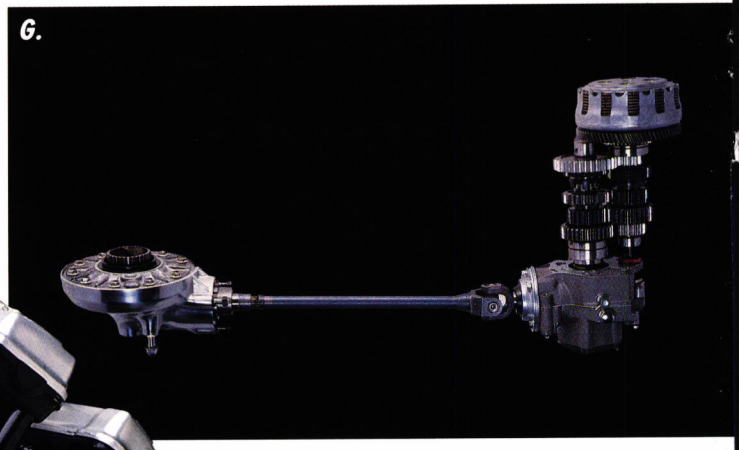
From its mighty V-4 engine to the tips of its quiet, large-capacity mufflers, there is only one machine deserving of the title of Luxury Tourer. The Cavalcade from Suzuki.

B.

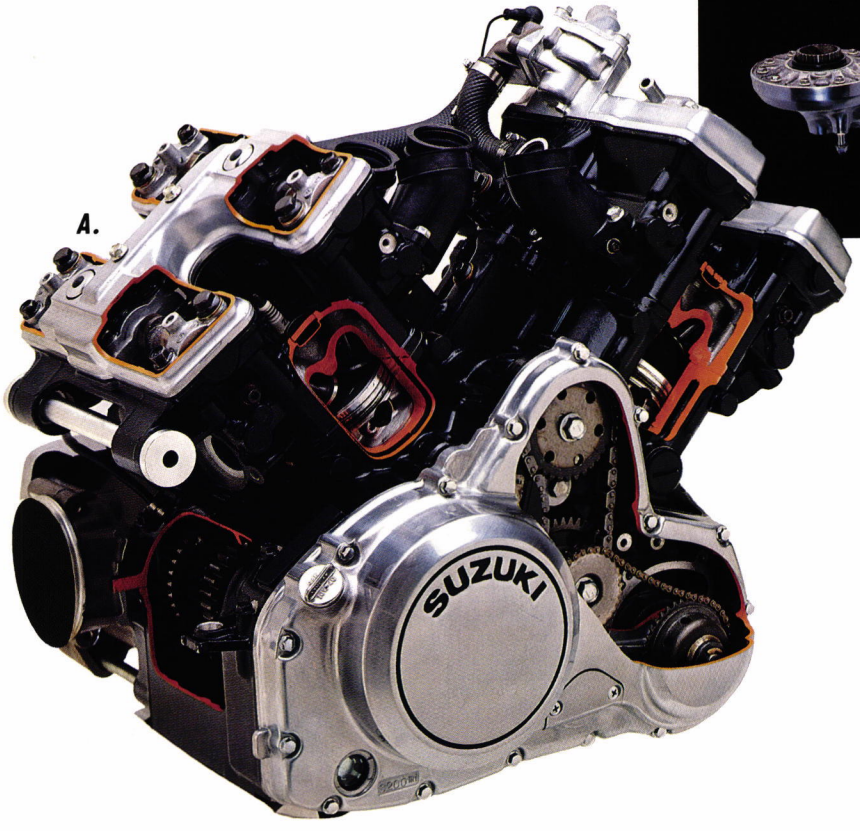
C.

E.

G.



A.



A. *The Cavalcade engine is the largest in its class. A 1,360cc, liquid-cooled, 82° V-4 with DOHC, 16 valves and Twin Swirl Combustion Chambers (TSCC) that produces strong torque and power at all rpm.*

B. *Handlebar-mounted sound system controls include station scan, muting and optional CB channel selector and talk button.*

C. *The LX's Computerized Cruise Control features special "resume" function.*

D. *The Cavalcade LX's high-quality sound system features an AM/FM stereo radio, auto-reverse cassette, metal tape compatibility, digital audio displays, mute system, station scan and optional CB and intercom.*

E. *Indicative of the exceptional Suzuki thoroughness of design found only in the Cavalcade is the quality of the tools to be found in the tool kit.*

F. *The extremely large capacity of the travel trunk and saddlebags offer unparalleled convenience. The Suzuki Cavalcade has the most combined storage area of any production touring motorcycle.*

G. *The Cavalcade features a smooth-shifting five-speed transmission with an overdrive 5th gear. Final drive is handled by quiet, enclosed shaft drive.*

H. *The Cavalcade offers easy-access storage with a fairing compartment for the rider and top-side storage in the saddlebags for the co-rider.*

CAVALCADE

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine Type:	Four-stroke, liquid-cooled, 82° V-4, DOHC, 16-valve, Twin Swirl Combustion Chambers (TSCC)
Displacement:	1,360cc
Bore & Stroke:	81 x 66mm
Compression Ratio:	9.5:1
Carburetor:	Four, constant velocity, Mikuni BDS33SS
Lubrication:	Wet sump
Ignition:	Transistorized
Starter:	Electric
Transmission:	5-speed
Final Drive:	Shaft drive
Overall Length:	2,530mm (99.6 in.)
Overall Width:	935mm (36.8 in.)
Overall Height:	1,550mm (61.0 in.)
Seat Height:	780mm (30.8 in.)
Wheelbase:	1,670mm (65.7 in.)
Brakes: Front: Rear:	Dual discs Disc
Tires: Front: Rear:	130/90-16-67H, tubeless 150/90-15-74H, tubeless
Fuel Tank Capacity:	23 lit. (6.1 gal.)
Cavalcade Ground Clearance: Cavalcade LX Ground Clearance:	140mm (5.5 in.) 130mm (5.1 in.)
Cavalcade Dry Weight: Cavalcade LX Dry Weight:	331kg (730 lbs.) 349kg (768 lbs.)
Cavalcade Suspension: Front: Rear: Cavalcade LX Suspension: Front: Rear:	41mm diameter forks, oil damped Air, oil damped 41mm diameter forks, oil damped Air, oil damped, Suzuki "Auto-Levelling System"
Cavalcade Color: Cavalcade LX Color:	Two-tone maroon, Two-tone charcoal Two-tone gold, Two-tone brown

STANDARD FEATURES

- 1,360cc, DOHC, TSCC, liquid-cooled, 16-valve V-4 engine.
- 180° crankshaft layout for smooth engine operation.
- Four, 33mm, CV carburetors for quick throttle response.
- Maintenance-free hydraulic valve adjusters.
- Hot-sparking, maintenance-free transistorized ignition.
- Adjustment-free camchains with automatic tensioners.
- Shaft drive with built-in damper for lash-free operation.
- 500-watt alternator and built-in accessory terminal.
- Adjustable-height windshield.
- 6.1-gallon fuel tank delivers long touring range.
- Largest combined storage capacity in its class.
- Removable soft liners for trunk and saddlebags.
- Self-cancelling turn signals.
- Triple disc brakes.
- Bright, rectangular headlight and dual taillights.
- Wind-tunnel designed windshield and fairing which allows rider to use engine heat in cold weather.
- Easy lift centerstand.
- Quiet, large capacity mufflers.
- Orthopedically shaped rider and co-rider seats.
- Four-way adjustable backrest for co-rider.
- Easily accessible saddlebag top storage compartment.
- Handy light and vanity mirror in travel trunk.
- Convenient storage in fairing.
- Hydraulic clutch eliminates adjustments.
- Variable adjustable co-rider footboards.
- Adjustable handlebar mount.
- Three-way adjustable rider footpeg mount.
- Chrome engine guards.
- 41mm diameter forks with rigid fork brace.
- Convenient spin-on type oil filter.
- Dual horns.
- Headlight adjustment knob.
- Check panel displays headlight, taillight, battery fluid and sidestand.
- Instrumentation includes: electric tachometer, fuel gauge, water temperature gauge, digital clock, oil pressure light and gear position indicator.

SPECIAL LX FEATURES FOR LUXURY TOURING

- High-quality audio system featuring: AM/FM stereo • Auto-reverse stereo cassette • Program change • Metal tape compatibility • Digital audio displays • Intercom function (intercom optional) • CB compatibility (CB optional) • Automatic volume control • Mute system • Handlebar-mounted controls • Separate co-rider controls.
- Pneumatically-inflatable co-rider seat and backrest.
- Computerized cruise control featuring: Resume function • Motorized actuator for precise speed control • Five independent cancel commands • Acceleration and deceleration capabilities using the system's control functions.
- Pneumatically-controlled "Auto-levelling System."

U.S. Suzuki Motor Corp. makes every effort to present the most current specifications and product features when printing this literature. Because of our policy of continual improvement, changes may be made in equipment, availability, specifications and features without notice.

Each 1986 GV1400GDG and GV1400GTG Touring Bike includes Suzuki's 24-month, 24,000-mile warranty at no extra cost. Refer to U.S. Suzuki "Limited Warranty" Policy for additional information.

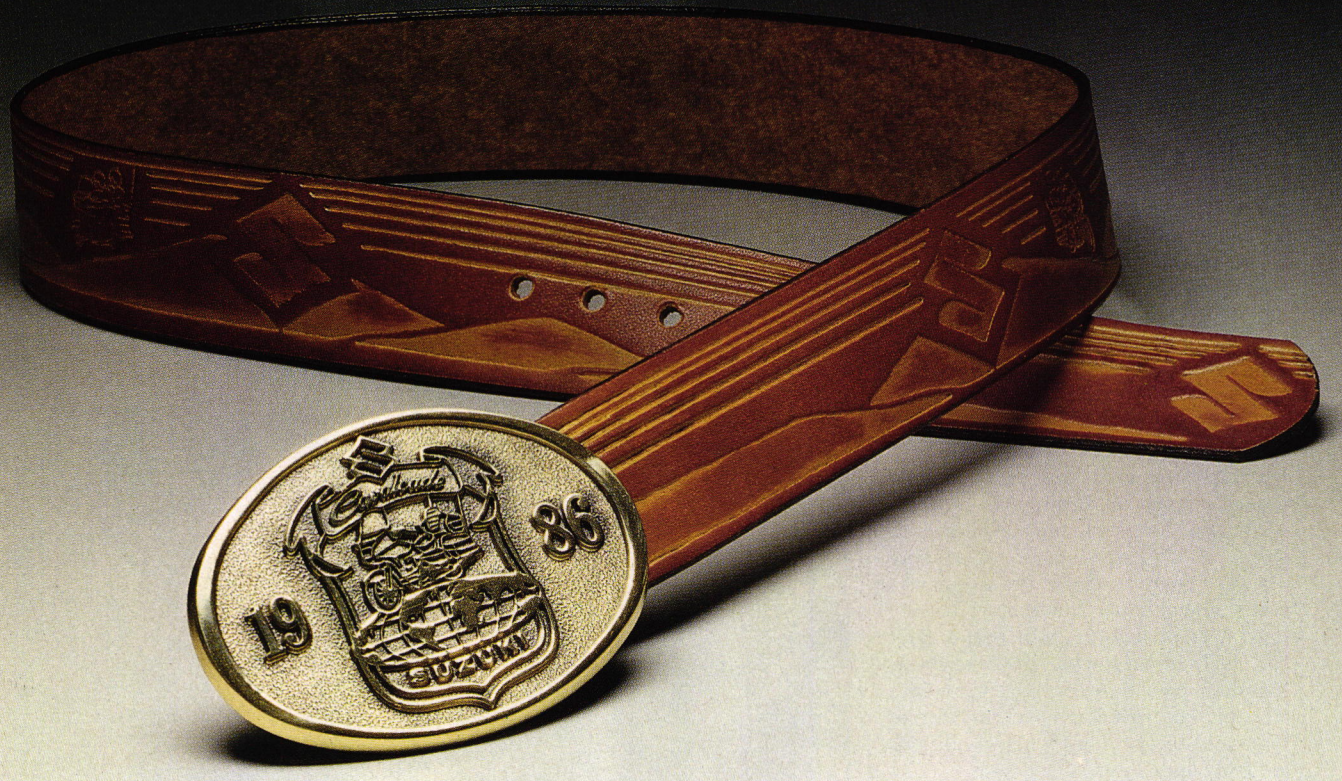
Suzuki wants every ride to be a safe one. Always wear a helmet, eye protection, and riding apparel. Call the Motorcycle Safety Foundation at 1-800-447-4700 for a riding course near you.

WORKS LIKE A SINGLE MOVING PART.

SUZUKI®

U.S. Suzuki Motor Corporation Printed in U.S.A. Part #99922-86301

HERE'S THE LAST REASON TO BUY A SUZUKI CAVALCADE.



The Suzuki Cavalcade has a lot going for it. And this summer it has something more. If you buy a Cavalcade, the ultimate in luxury touring, between June 1st and August 31st, we'll throw in a matching pair of Cavalcade belts. Top quality leather belts with a custom design buckle for rider and co-rider.

We're not making this offer because we think you need another reason to buy a Cavalcade, but because we figured it would be a nice idea.

So come on in and see the Cavalcade. You don't have to have a reason. But there sure are a lot to choose from.

SUZUKI®

WORKS LIKE A SINGLE MOVING PART.

Offer good in 49 continental states, June 1-August 31, 1985. Limited to supply on hand.

PRODUCT EVALUATION:

M.A. Brown Riding Suit

For the poise of summer.

• Anyone who's ridden in the boiler-room heat of summer knows the problem intimately: Precisely when you need protective clothing, it's too hot to endure it. So many riders discard their jackets in order to salvage some of the pleasures of riding when the heat threatens suffocation.

Finally, though, someone has made riding gear to do battle with the muggy menace of summer. That someone is Mike Brown, and the gear is his M.A. Brown Riding Suit. Essentially, the suit consists of zip-up coveralls made of 65 percent polyester/35 percent cotton fabric, but that description doesn't really do justice, and is roughly akin to saying a TZ750 is a motorcycle. The difference between Brown's suit and regular coveralls is in the details, which fall into three groups: the Cordura-backed foam pads at the elbows, shoulders and knees; the stretch panels in the sides, underarms and back, that provide both airflow and good fit; and the zippered panels on the chest and the removable arms that allow tailoring the suit's thermal qualities to rider preference.

It's that capacity for tuning a rider's temperature that makes the M.A. Brown suit special. Brown even includes a 14-page owner's manual, which contains a "Temperature Operating Ranges" chart to direct the use of the suit's adjustability. Not that you really need a manual to figure it out; a rider can easily adjust the two zippered chest-mounted panels to control airflow into the suit, and even remove the sleeves from mid-biceps down when conditions get truly appalling.

Some riders might view the manual and the array of zippers with some degree of amusement at first. But it only took a few rides in the steamy depths of Washington, D.C., behind the fairings of my 900 Ninja and BMW R100RS to replace any amusement with admiration. The funny flaps and zany zippers might generate chuckles, but because of them, the suit helped me keep my cool. And it did so in part by being easy to put on, because of the stretch panels that allowed me to climb into the suit with a minimum of struggle and without losing the crease in my trousers.

Once suited up, I could motor off to work, warm and dry, in the morning's damp chill, with the collar secured in the full-up mandarin position and the front panels closed. Ten hours later, after the solar thermostat had turned the Eastern seaboard into a hothouse, I could secure the collar down, lower the front panels fully and ride home in almost as much comfort as if I were air-conditioned. Which, in a way I was, because the airflow through the considerable vent area allows evaporative action, even behind a fairing. Moreover, the Brown suit did more than just keep me cool; it put money in my pocket, too. The coveralls kept dirt off my clothes, saving me on dry cleaning bills.

Even so, there are things the M.A. Brown suit can't do. It cannot, for instance, take the place of a leather jacket for protection, Cordura-backed pads or no. Nor does it work as a rainsuit or as a cold-weather suit. But what it *can* do is restore the joy of riding, even in the stifling heat of summer, and that feature alone makes the suit a mandatory part of my riding kit. It's the hot ticket for cool summer riding. —*Steve Thompson*

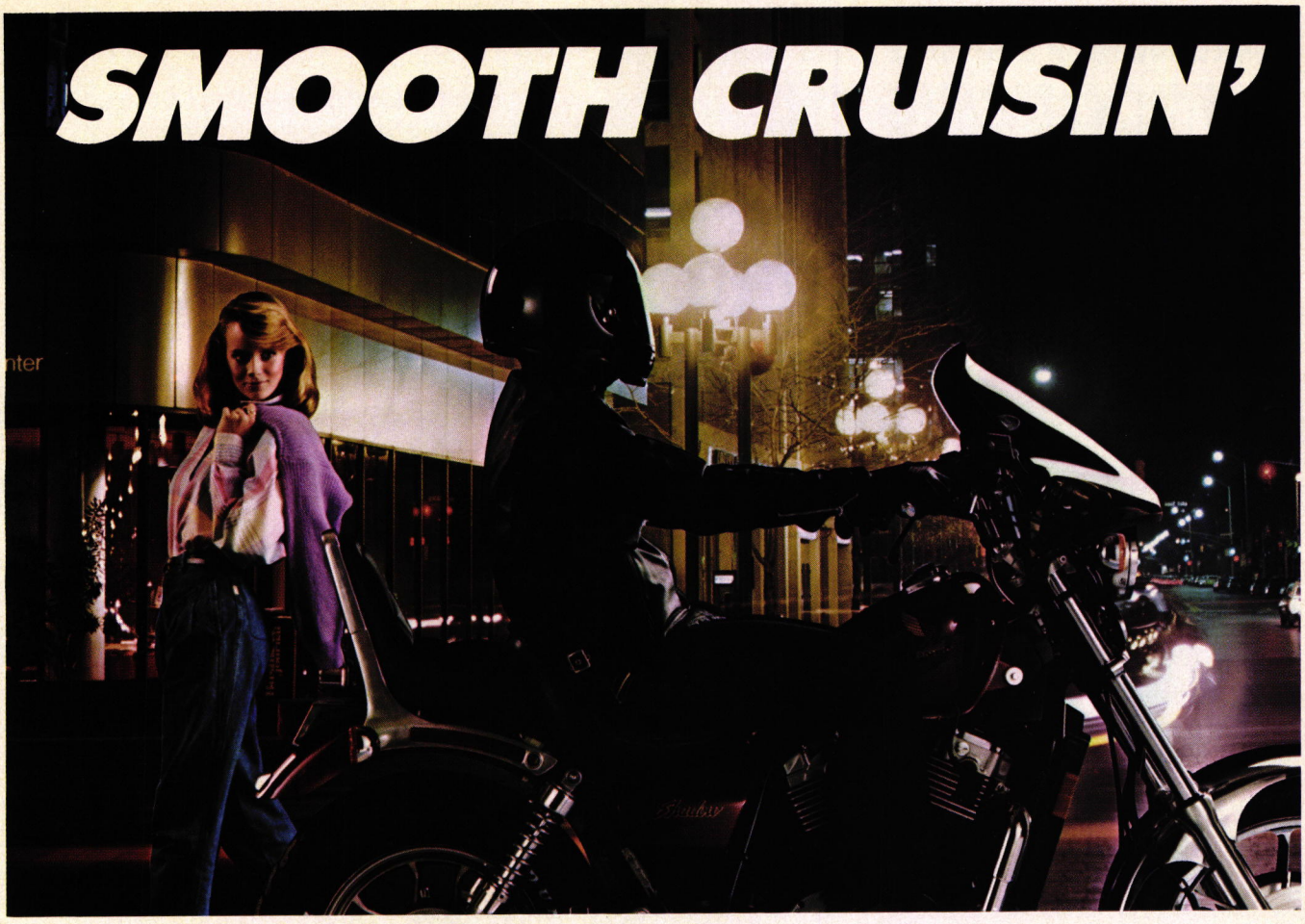
M.A. Brown Riding Suit
Distributors: Rocky Cycle Co. Inc., Ed Tucker Distributing. Available through motorcycle dealerships.
Suggested retail price: $79.95
Sizes: 12 men's sizes and three women's sizes
Available colors: gray with black trim, white with red and blue trim, solid black and solid beige.

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1985 DAVID DEWHURST

Zippers, flaps and pads give M.A. Brown suit its patchwork look

But it's all to one purpose; keeping you cool when the weather's not.

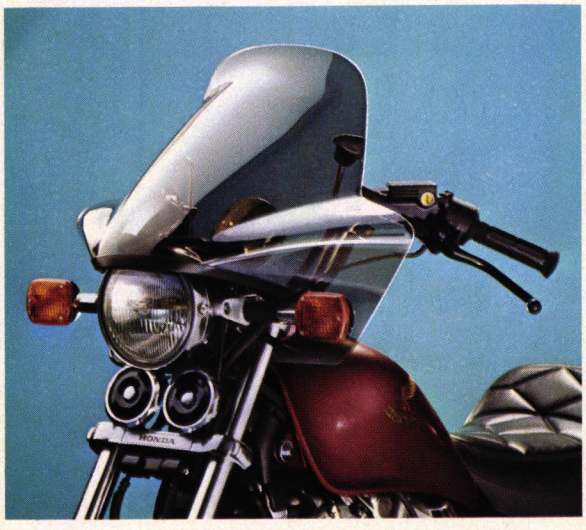
SMOOTH CRUISIN'



THE CRUISER™ FAIRING, LOOKS AS GOOD ON YOUR BIKE AS YOU DO.

You've got the right bike. Now get the right fairing . . . the Cruiser from Silhouette. No other fairing makes you look this good. The clean, aerodynamic styling complements the total appearance of your machine without disturbing its classic profile. And our unique Pop-Lok™ mounting system means greater riding comfort is yours in just a matter of minutes.

Silhouette wrote the book on formed acrylic fairings. We revolutionized the fairing industry over ten years ago with our one-piece, all-clear concept. Today, we still lead the way with innovative design and head-turning styling. The fact is nobody forms acrylic fairings like Silhouette. So if you want a look that gets the looks, put on the Cruiser fairing from Silhouette. And see how smooth cruisin' can be.



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BELL
CYCLE GUIDE
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Honda VF1000R

European medicine for the Greener Grass Syndrome.

BY CHARLES EVERITT

Every year the hue and cry of frustrated American sporting riders rises anew, with fresh moaning and weeping and gnashing of teeth. And always the piteous wail remains the same: "Give us the good stuff."

The cause for such soulful lamentations is always the same, too: an almost unbroken stream of triple-distilled sporting hardware, piped straight to Europe, with no detours. It manifests itself in the Greener Grass Syndrome, wherein American riders lust for things they cannot have. And fueling that lust is the notion that Euro-spec machinery is inherently blessed with more goodness than American-bound iron.

Well, Honda has listened to those pleas and given its VF1000R an American visa, sending one of the most coveted of all Euro-bikes here to tempt Yankee enthusiasts. The VF1000R replaces the VF1000F Interceptor in Honda's '85 lineup, and although the two are quite similar, the R-model takes the F's already formidable act and cranks it up a few notches, with gear-driven cams, a no-compromise riding position and a flashy, eye-popping fully faired appearance.

No question; the VF1000R's racy looks are it's strongest message. But therein lies another message, too, hidden in the swoops and curves of the full fairing: Surprisingly, despite the bike's European cachet, Honda isn't counting on the VF1000R's capabilities as an ultimate, class-leading, double-lowdown-throwdown sportbike to be its biggest selling point in this country. Not that the R-model has no place on winding backroads; that's hardly the case. It's just that the VF/R's primary role in American moto-life is to be a high-tech flashbike. And that puts a new twist on the flashbike label, because previously it's been almost the sole property of European-built machines, motorcycles with racy fiberglass draped over dated engines and chassis. Honda has modified the formula, though, by packing contemporary hardware under the R's

Continued

full fairing, which gives the bike more than a passing resemblance to Honda's own 1024cc FWS Formula 1 roadracer.

The VF1000R has plenty of racy bits to back up its FWS looks, too. For instance, like the AMA F1 machine, the VF/R has dual floating front disc brakes in place of the F-model's bolt-on discs—the floating discs allow more even heat expansion and less distortion—and a dual-opposed-piston rear caliper mounted underneath the swingarm, instead of the F's single-piston, top-mounted caliper.

Perhaps the most notable bit of FWS techno-trickery, though, is the gear-drive system for the camshafts in the 998.4cc liquid-cooled vee-four. Honda employed such a system on its championship-winning Grand Prix bikes of the '60s, returned to it for the FWS and currently uses it in its VF750F-based Superbikes. And the advantages of gear drive are twofold: Compared to the F-model's chain-drive setup, the VF/R's gear-driven cams provide both more precise valve timing and reduced friction. Indeed, Honda claims the gear drive reduces mechanical power losses by a whopping 30 percent on the vee-four, while allowing a 500-rpm higher redline and contributing to the R's claim of 117 horsepower, up four over the F.

But there's no free lunch; gear drives take their toll in increased weight, noise and manufacturing costs. Yet Honda claims its use of split, spring-loaded gears—to reduce gear lash and, thus, noise—and new manufacturing techniques make the benefits outstrip the shortcomings for the VF/R.

Apart from the cam drive, though—and the additional horsepower—Honda changed the VF/R's powertrain very little from VF/F specs. The R has a fractionally higher compression ratio (10.7:1 versus 10.5:1), five degrees more duration for the exhaust cam, a slightly higher (lower numerically) second gear, increased volume for the mufflers and airbox, and one more tooth on its rear sprocket. Otherwise, the two are practically indentical.

The similarities extend to performance, too. The stock in trade of Honda's vee-fours has been a mile-wide powerband, but not even the VF1000F motor could boast a powerband as broad and deep as the VF/R's. From the very first time the sparkplugs fire, horsepower flows from the vee-four in a constant, uninterrupted stream, with excellent low-end wallop and knuckle-whitening midrange. True, such performance is commonplace among other liter-size powerplants, but the VF/R revs, too. That translates into a phenomenal 11,000-rpm spread of power—or 11,500, if you want to wind the engine right into the rev limiter—and that's performance no other liter-class motor can touch.

What's more, the broad, smooth power delivery, aided by clean carburetion, makes the VF/R motor one of the best in the business for backroad rushing. Aboard the big Honda, a rider doesn't have to concern himself with such trifles as being at the right rpm or in the correct gear; all he has to do is pull the wire to flat *fly*. That makes the VF easier to ride than, say, Yamaha's FJ1100 or Kawasaki's 900 Ninja, both of which have spikier powerbands. There is a slight increase in power from 8000-11,000 rpm, and you can make better headway by staying in that range. The point is, though, you don't *have* to; you can go almost as fast just by letting the motor pull.

Keeping the engine in its muscular midrange helps avoid some of the vibration, too. The VF/R buzzes with an annoying intensity through the grips and footpegs from about 6000 rpm up to redline. No matter how high you spin the engine, though, you'll be hard pressed to stay in front of a Ninja or FJ1100 on a long, straight piece of asphalt. Yes, in top-gear roll-ons from 60 mph, the five-speed Honda trounces the six-speed Kawasaki, and gets the initial jump on the Yamaha. But the FJ steams past at about

90 mph, and if the Ninja's in fifth gear, it's goodbye VF/R. In roll-ons from 100 mph, the VF/R returns the favor to the FJ and pulls away, but loses again to the Ninja. Additionally, the VF1000R's 11.308-second/121.78-mph quarter-mile figures put it well down from the '84 VF1000F's 11.121/123.45 performance.

And the reason for the VF/R's disappointing straight-line performance can be summed up a single word: weight. At a porky 578 pounds, the Honda outweighs the VF1000F by a crushing 42 pounds; by comparison, the FJ1100 tapes in at 543 and the Ninja at 523. Most of the weight seems placed up high, too, because although the R has the same chassis geometry and 16-inch front wheel of the VF1000F, it also has a decidedly more top-heavy feel, which affects its handling at a sporting pace. Charging into tight corners, for example, the Honda feels unwieldy, and in fast esses it's slow to respond. The bike does steer precisely, and the steering is light on initial roll-in, but when you're really hustling, picking it back up and pitching it over for an S-bend takes both time and muscle. The weight also makes the VF vigorously resist both line changing in mid-turn and combined braking/turning maneuvers.

The situation changes, though, if the road uncoils just a bit. Then, the VF1000R hides its weight well, and can show off its moves. This motorcycle simply excels in the fast stuff, where it can fulfill your racer fantasies like few machines around. Pitching the VF/R into 100-mph corners amounts to a roaring good time, and the bike's stable handling keeps it locked onto its line like a laser-guided ICBM. The Honda works well in moderately fast turns, too. It's primarily in tight corners or quick direction changes that the VF/R's sporting capabilities come up short.

None of the blame for the VF's relative lack of sporting competence can be laid on the bike's suspension. Like those on the VF/F, the R's components adjust for air and rebound damping, with four-position adjustment for the TRAC anti-dive on the fork. And set up for a 160-pound rider, with 6 psi in the fork, 35 psi in the shock (0-43 psi is the suggested range; 0-6 psi for the fork) and both rebound-damping adjusters on No.3 (of three), the bike tracks well at speed over most paving irregularities. Plus, at those settings, the VF/R boasts enormous cornering clearance; hotshots eventually will touch down the fairing first, but by then there's little room left on the fat Dunlop K500 rear tire.

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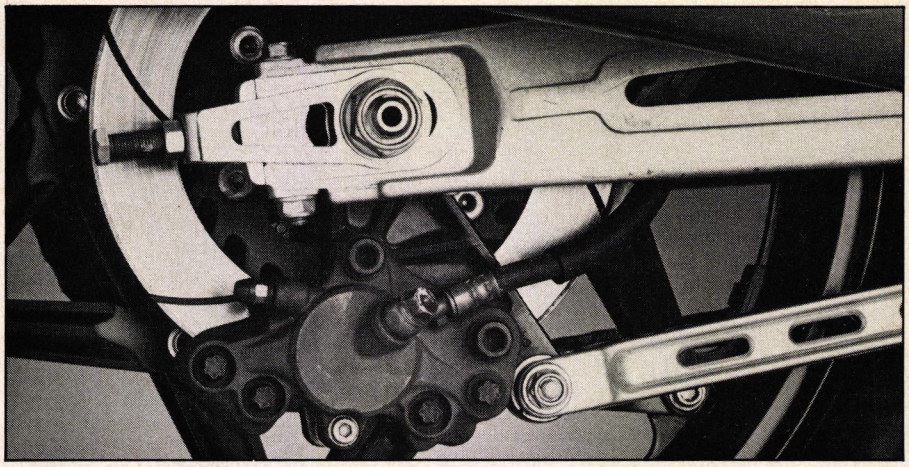
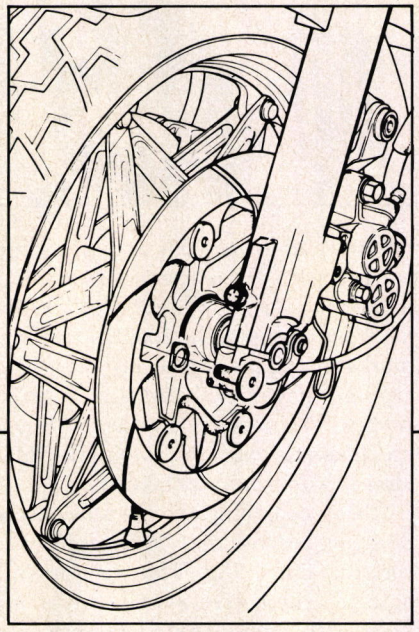
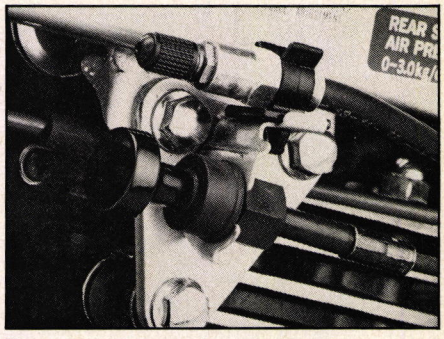


PHOTOGRAPHY © 1985 VIC HUBER

VF/R's rear end features tiny ventilated disc and double-action caliper

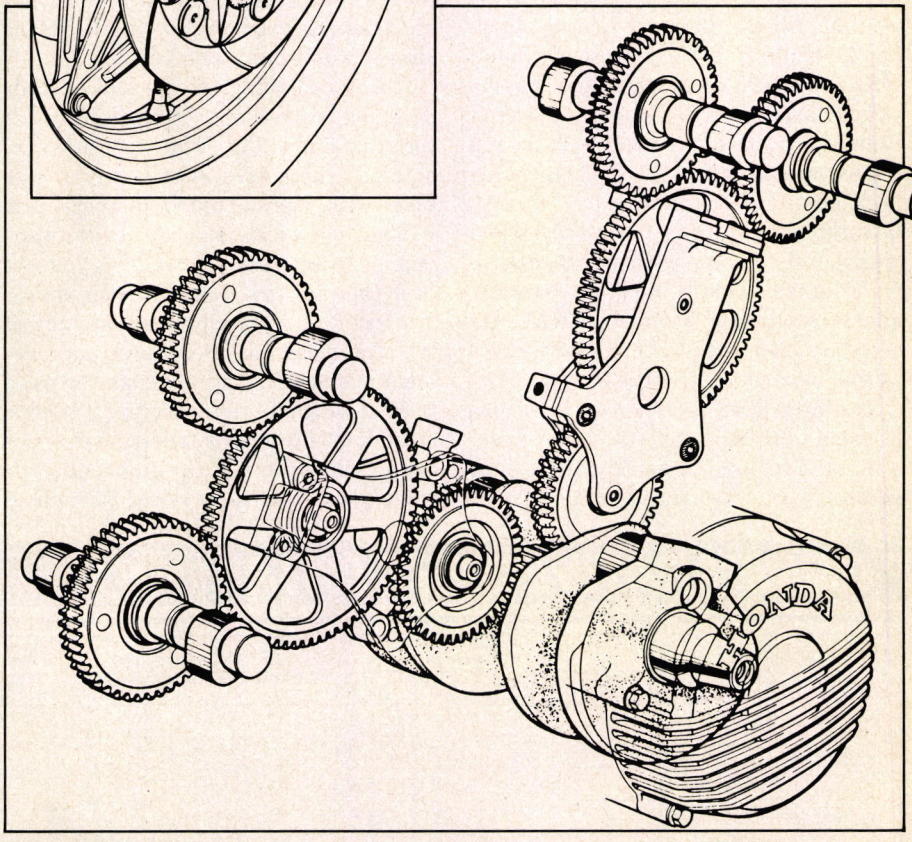
High-tech hardware for a high-profile flashbike.





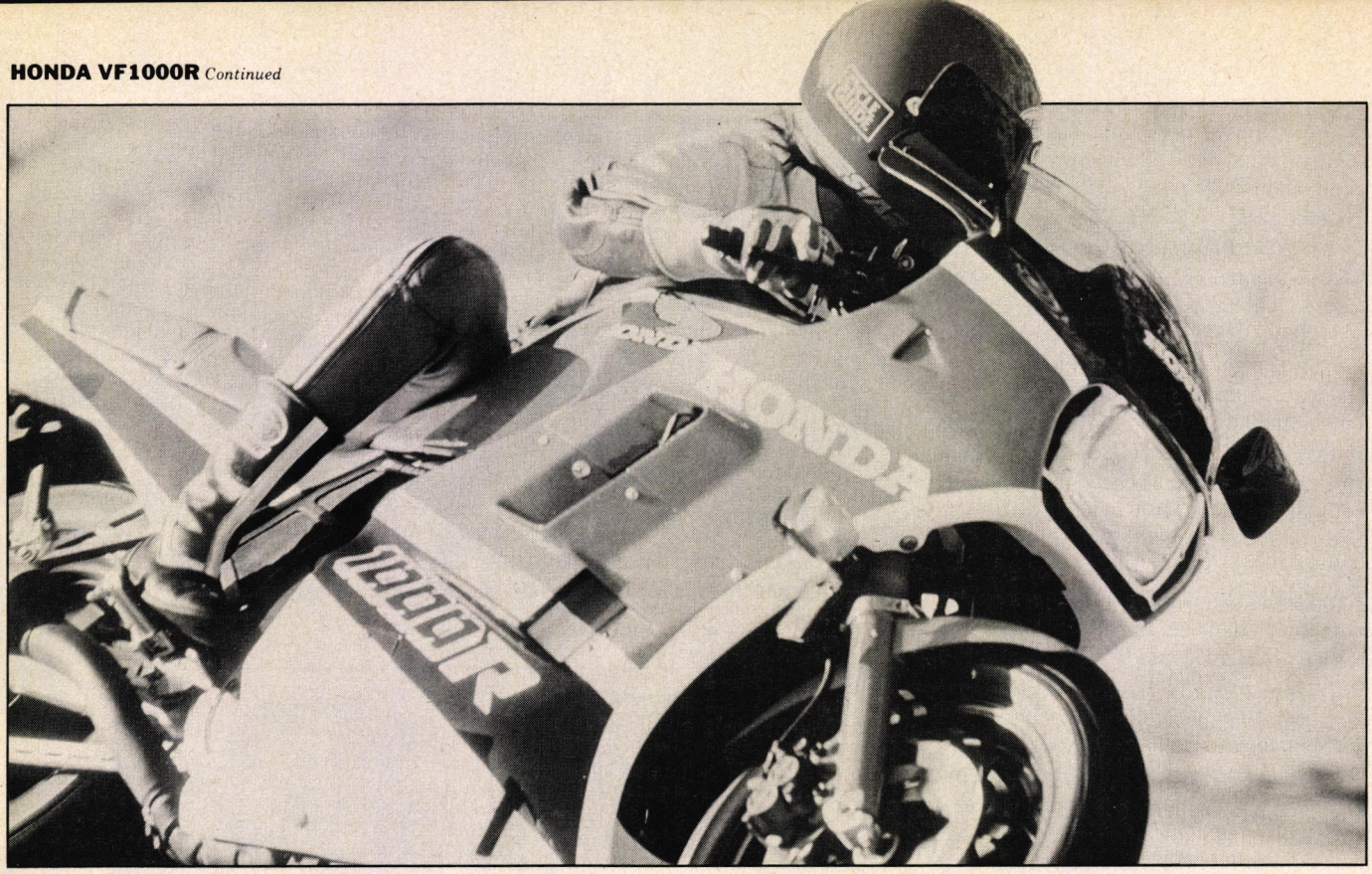
Easy-access suspension adjustments

For air and three-way rebound damping.



Floating discs, ComStar wheels and gear cam drive set the R apart from the VF1000F

And provide a direct connection to Honda's FWS Formula 1 racebike.



That tire is a significant departure from the Euro-verison VF1000R, which wears a Dunlop radial in the rear. But, after testing, American Honda found no benefit in the radial to justify its extra cost. And the Yankee R seems none the worse for it; the bias-ply Dunlop grips well and breaks loose predictably. Such happy results didn't extend to the bike's TRAC anti-dive, though. Testing resulted in lower TRAC rates for the R than was the case with the VF/F; the R's TRAC system provides 12-14 percent less compression damping. Consequently, the R dives noticeably when you clamp on the powerful, progressive front brake. That's too bad, because, characteristically, Honda's TRAC design has been one of the few anti-dives in the industry that worked.

Testing also led to 20 percent less compression damping for the rear shock, compared to the F's, and dual-rate fork springs, with softer initial and stiffer final rates than the F's straight-wound springs. And those changes combine to make the R feel downright plush. With 0 psi front and rear, the 1000R's ride is remarkably supple, especially over badly rippled pavement and small, sharp bumps. The shock allows just a trace of harshness through, but overall the ride is almost of touring-bike quality.

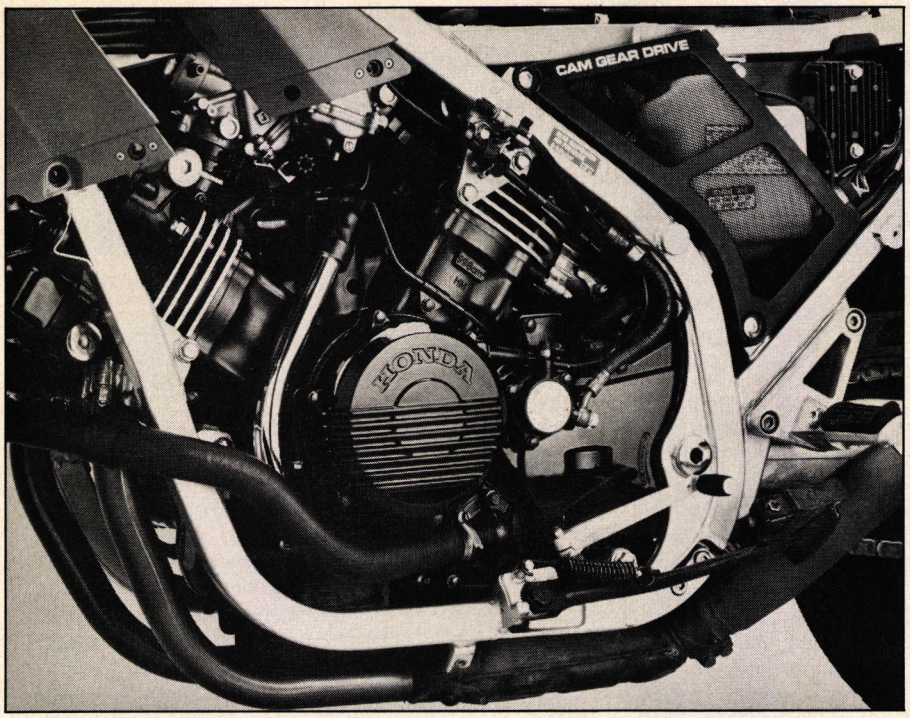
It's a good thing the suspension coddles you, because the VF/R's ergonomics certainly don't. The R has a surprisingly cramped riding position for such a large bike, with high-mounted footpegs that fold up your legs, and low, far-forward clip-on handlebars that stretch you out over the tank and overload your wrists. You can adjust the clip-ons, but none of the other positions offers much improvement over stock. And although the wind blast coming off the windscreen hits your shoulders and helps support your upper body, taking some of the strain off your wrists, you have to be doing 85 mph or better to get the benefit. As a result, at legal speeds on board the VF/R, you begin to wonder what crime you've committed to warrant the punishment.

But the ergonomics simply serve to define Honda's purpose for this motorcycle with crystal clarity. This is a high-tech flashbike, a rolling neon sign that shouts, "Look at me!" And in that respect, the VF1000R is an unqualified success; people all but twist their heads off trying to catch a glimpse of this motorcycle as it goes by. That's something few other motorcycles—especially those from Japan—can lay claim to.

The problem, though, is that the R-model is a *sportbike,* too, and that makes for an interesting paradox. Because some of the very things that give this motorcycle its flash appeal—the gear cam drive and splashy fairing—add weight; 7.6 extra pounds in the engine alone, compared to the VF/F. And it's weight that makes the R a less capable sporting tool than

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make and Model	Quarter-Mile, sec/mph	Top Speed, mph	Weight, lbs.	Stopping Distance From 60 mph, ft.
Honda VF1000R-'85	11.308/121.78	149	578	135
Honda VF1000F-'84	11.121/123.45	150	536	125
Yamaha FJ1100-'85	11.002/123.28	147	543	138
Honda V65 Magna-'85	11.440/118.42	142	566	133
Kawasaki 900 Ninja-'84	11.181/123.62	146	523	126
Suzuki GS1150ES-'84	11.268/122.44	148	542	122



High peak power isn't the R-motor's long suit

But a deliciously wide powerband is; a rider has 11,000 rpm to play with.

the machine it replaces, and less capable than most of the competition, for that matter. The bike's very European-ness, if you will, hobbles its sporting intent.

And if you're looking for a reason for the R's shortcoming, consider this: Honda introduced the VF1000R in Europe as the ultimate big-bore sporter, and it was just that—until the FJ1100 and Ninja were released. Honda brought the same motorcycle here and gave it a slightly revised mission. Almost nothing else has been changed, but neither has the competition.

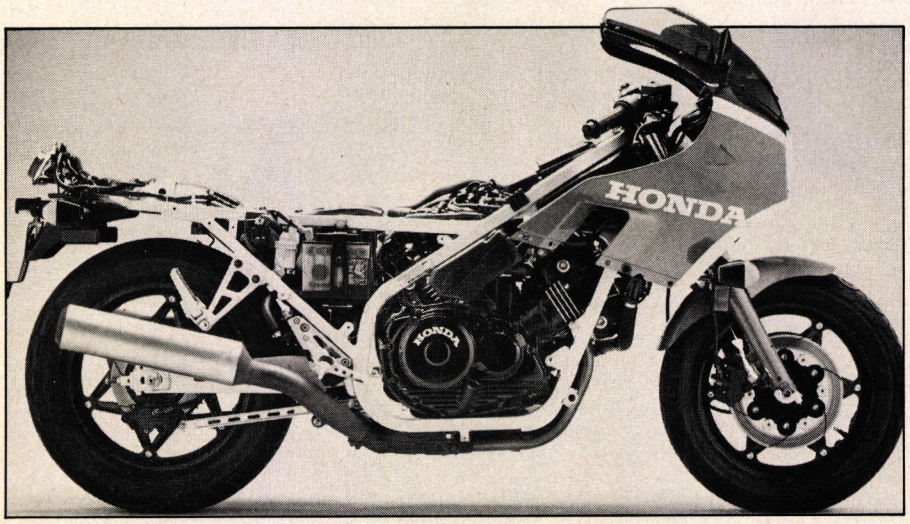
As a result, the VF1000R can dampen a burning case of Euro moto-lust like a pitcher of cold water. It gives the lie to the elitist view that all European machinery is inherently superior. Because—in this case—the grass *isn't* greener. •

Nits:

- No centerstand.
- Oil dipstick hidden behind a cover; you need a screwdriver just to check the oil level.

Picks:

- Soft rubber grips are comfortable.
- Handlebar switches are well thought out and easy to use.
- Suspension adjusters are accessible.
- Thumbwheel-adjustable levers are convenient.



VF1000R combines broad-band power and stable handling in a striking package

Without its flashbike armor, though, the R stands naked.

Ride Review

• Like a lot of sportbike aficionados, I awaited the VF1000R's U.S. introduction with slathering jowls. Here, at last, was an undiluted bit of European exotica we've all waited for. But that was when I still thought the VF/R was a cutting-edge sportbike. It's not; this overweight Bol d'Or replica is just a European cruiser, every bit the profiler's accessory as an 1100 Shadow is in this country. The only difference is that the 1000R's audience leans more toward full-leathers and duct-taped knees than bomber jackets and mirrored sunglasses.

So for those of you who've been drooling over the prospect of the VF being a world-beating European-spec sportbike, you can wipe the spittle off your chin. Because after all the wait, the VF/R is to current sportbikes what turkey roll is to the real thing on Thanksgiving.

—Jim Miller

• Something got lost in the translation: I remember my envy of European sport riders when Honda first unveiled its VF1000R over there. But after riding our American version, I realized the original Euro-photos I saw were misleading. They led me to believe the VF1000R was as much a full-on racer as it was a streetbike, and that's certainly not the case.

Although the bike sports the same Honda race-team colors and full fairing that impressed me on the original Euro model, my expectations of a street-legal piece of racing hardware were shattered the first time I threw a leg over the VF/R. The R's handling falls woefully short of what the styling suggests; what we have here is a slow-steering, overweight sportbike. And from where I sit, those shortcomings make the VF1000R a profiler's repliracer. Nothing more. *—Dain Gingerelli*

• I'm truly sorry to see the VF1000F Interceptor kicked out of Honda's lineup after only one model year. With another year of refinement it could have displaced Yamaha's FJ1100 as the best wide-band sportbike around. After all, the VF/F started out with a smooth, tractable engine and a marvelously comfortable riding position. In short, the big Interceptor was an excellent all-around sportbike that only needed some minor fine-tuning.

But we'll never know if the 1000F could have been made into an FJ-killer, because its replacement, the VF1000R, isn't even in the ballpark. Not only is the new 1000R heavier *and* slower, but it also has one of the most uncomfortable seating positions in modern motorcycling. To me, the R is a clear two steps backward, and an unwelcome replacement for a potentially great bike.

—Marc Cook

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Honda VF1000R — street

IMPORTER: American Honda Motor Co. Inc., 100 West Alondra Blvd., Gardena, California 90247

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $5698

ENGINE

Type . . . . . liquid-cooled four-stroke 90 degree tandem vee-four
Valve arrangement . . . . . double overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke . . . . . 77.0mm x 53.6mm
Displacement 998.4cc
Compression ratio 10.7:1
Engine redline . . . . . 11,000 rpm
Carburetion . . . . . four 34.2mm Keihin constant-vacuum
Air filter . . . . . disposable paper element
Lubrication . . . . . wet sump
Starting system . . . . . electric only
Ignition . . . . . transistorized breakerless
Charging system . . . . . 12-volt; 360-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 16-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive . . . . . straight-cut gears; 1.971:1 ratio
Clutch . . . . . wet, multi-plate, with one-way overrun clutch
Final drive . . . . #530 O-ring chain (⅝-in. pitch, ⅜-in. width); 2.588:1 (44/17) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.733	13.947	5.46
II	1.882	9.605	7.93
III	1.500	7.654	9.95
IV	1.240	6.327	12.03
V	1.037	5.292	14.39

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . . Showa air-spring, 41mm stanchion tube diameter, 3-position adjustable rebound damping, 4-position brake-actuated hydraulic anti-dive/5.4 in. (138mm)
Rear . . . . . single Showa air-spring shock, 3-position adjustable rebound damping/4.5 in. (114mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . dual single-action hydraulic calipers, 10.6-in. (268mm) effective disc diameter
Rear . . . . . double-action hydraulic caliper, 8.5-in. (215mm) effective disc diameter

TIRES

Front . . . . . 120/80V16-V250 Dunlop K500 tubeless
Rear . . . . . 140/80V17-V250 Dunlop K500 tubeless

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

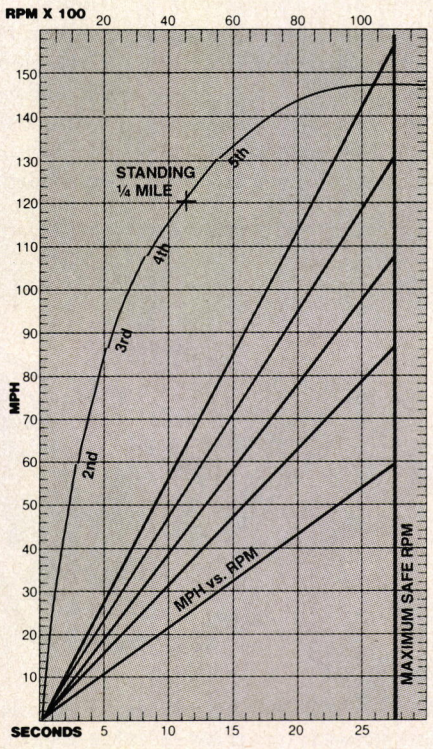
Weight . . . . . 578 lbs. (262.2kg)
Weight distribution . . . . . 49.1% front, 50.9% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) . . . . . 995 lbs. (433.2kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) . . . . . 337 lbs. (153.0kg)
Wheelbase . . . . . 58.5 to 60.0 in. (1487 to 1523mm)
Seat height . . . . . 31.7 in. (806mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . adjustable from 26.0–27.4 in. (660–695mm)
Footpeg height . . . . . 15.0 in. (381mm)
Ground clearance . . . 5.5 in. (139mm), at exhaust crossover
Steering head angle . . . . . 28.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . 3.86 in. (98mm)
Frame . . . . . box-section and tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity . . . . . 3.7 qt. (3.5*l*)
Fuel tank . . . . . steel, 6.3 gal. (24.0*l*), including 1.2 gal. (4.7*l*) reserve
Instrumentation . . . . . speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, coolant temperature gauge

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range . . . . . 20 to 42 mpg (9 to 18 km/*l*)
Average fuel consumption . . . . . 28 mpg (12 km/*l*)
Cruising range, maximum . . . . . 126 to 265 miles (203 to 426km)
Cruising range, reserve only . . . 24 to 50 miles (39 to 80km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated . . . . . 28 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated . . . . . 51 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration . . . . . 11.308 sec., 121.78 mph (196 kph)
Top speed (observed) . . . . . 149 mph (240 kph)
Stopping distance from 30 mph . . . . . 34 ft. (10.4m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph . . . . . 135 ft. (41.1m)

WARRANTY: 12 months, unlimited mileage

AVAILABLE COLOR: red-white-and-blue only



All weight and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

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Carlisle understands that you ride a 10-block commute, yet still strive for the 1000-mile day. Tourmax is a skillful integration of a series of ultimate touring tire characteristics. The tread design is as unique as the tire itself. Wide traction blocks keep more rubber on the road, while diagonal WaterSheds channel water to the side and away from the tread path for unparalleled wet weather riding.

Tourmax also has identical tread patterns for both front and rear tires, and a unique unidirectional design for superior straight-line tracking and ride stabilization.

A special network of tie-bars and sipes links each traction block to limit mile-robbing squirm and to further stabilize your ride.

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DREAM RIDES:

One lap of the ALPS

In which the Over The Hill Gang discovers motorcycle heaven on earth.

BY STEVE THOMPSON

There are only two good ways to tour the Alps. One is by motorcycle. And the other is by motorcycle. It isn't just because of the incredible scenery, or because the Alps simply *leap* from the flatlands, instead of growing out of foothills the way other mountains do. Nor is it just because the Alpine mountain passes are like no other place on earth, though they undeniably are.

No, it's mainly because of the roads. The roads are God's gift to motorcyclists, compensation for the boring, overpoliced roads throughout the rest of the universe. They begin down on the flatlands as normal two-lanes, wide, smooth and neatly trimmed. But then they climb. And because they climb steeply, they snake. They twist back upon themselves like limp licorice. They grow narrow, nasty and bumpy. They grow scary, without any form of protection against a slide over the side and a fall straight down. In short, they grow hostile to every form of wheeled transportation man has devised.

Except motorcycles. A good bike is king of the hill, giving the motorcyclist an Alpine tour unavailable to any other traveler. Motorcycles are narrow, agile and quick, and can pass the lumbering lines of four-wheelers that plod like herds of cattle from one hairpin to the next. No car is quick or narrow enough; even if there is space ahead for the frustrated Ferrari driver to pass, there is no space to the side. The result is that a motorcyclist can swallow whole sections of road at his own pace, almost never halted by road or traffic conditions. That means freedom to stop, contemplate, and then press on at maximum desired speed—ideal conditions for a world-class sport-tour.

For those who have ridden it, a lap of the Alps is *the* world-class sport tour.

Some riders would state flatly that a lap of the Alps is not just a world-class tour, it's *the* world-class tour. I might have disagreed—before I joined the Over the Hill Gang and found out for myself. As usual with the best group tours, this one started by a collection of coincidences, when a bunch of guys from America and Europe—most of whom didn't know one another—discovered that they all wanted to do the Alps at about the same time. But we wanted to do it *right,* and the rightness required serious planning. It came from Bas Plesman, president of Saab-Belgium, a BMW rider and motorcycle crazy. Plesman knows the Alps. What he didn't know was filled in by his riding companion, Col. Jan Charms of the Royal Dutch Marines. Together, they had been sketching out the ideal Alpine ride (See "The Plesman Plan," page 72) for four years—and this would be the year to test it.

Four Americans and two Europeans made up the core of the Over The Hill Gang, as we called ourselves, a group of middle-aged crazies who were, indeed, going over as many hills as they could find in a week or so of Alpine riding. The group met at the end of June in a little town in the suburbs of Frankfurt-am-Main. I had reservations about riding in a group, and especially in a group whose members I didn't know. But as we pored over the Dutch route maps, it became clear that the plan allowed us to ride at our own pace, deviate at will, and meet again at night at planned stops. It really was not a group ride at all, then. And that night, as we folded our maps into shapes that would fit in the pockets of our tankbags, a kind of pre-race excitement enveloped the group. Any touring rider will recognize it: the urge to go, to put all the planning and logistics and money-counting behind. Motorcycles, after all, are escape capsules; we wanted to *escape.* The next day, under typically gloomy Mittel-Europaische skies, we did.

What we found confirmed the Alps ride as the tour of a lifetime. Daily, we saw an endless series of stunning vistas, scenery so overwhelming that we almost grew *tired* of having our eyes bug out every time we crested a hill and found yet another emerald-green meadow nestled between majestic pine forests, or a moonscape in gray granite and frozen snow. We couldn't help comparing each new scene to ones already in our memory banks. But the Alps are not the Rockies, the Sierras or the Cascades: The hand of man has been there longer, and Europe's

Continued

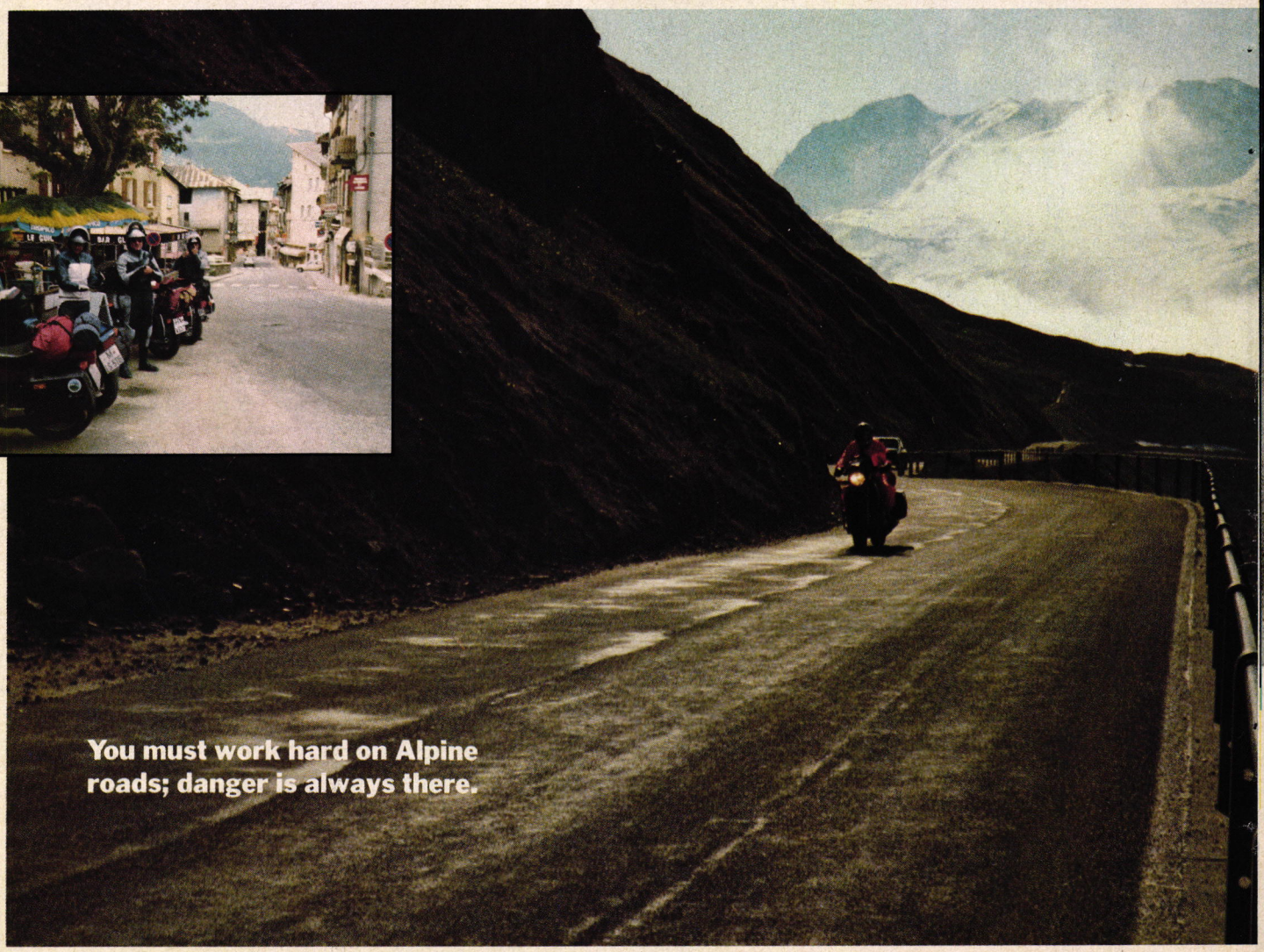
unique melding of civilization and wilderness is apparent everywhere. In the French Alps, for instance, on the road down from the Col d'Isere to Lanslebourg, the treeless vastness is relieved by ancient stone huts set into the lee sides of protecting granite outcroppings, once the refuges of snowblind travelers, now ideal stopping places for campers and cross-country skiers.

And everywhere, there are hostelries, old and new, sturdy edifices with thick shutters and thicker walls, standing lonely and proud near the passes. People have fought their ways across those passes for eons, something the ancient shrines continually remind you of; as I flicked my wrist and devoured a mile of 15 percent gradient, I passed a shrine to the Virgin Mary with fresh flowers around it, and felt a sense of wonder at the technology that allowed me to do so.

Such philosophy, however central to the Alpine ride, is only part of the experience. The roads themselves become a playground. They offer endless variety in surface, width, grade, quality and possible speed, and are always full of surprises. Riders used to coddling road-signs will be shocked to round a curve and find most of the outside roadbed gone, without warning; but this is an Alpine pass road, not Route 17 in Paramus, New Jersey. The assumption clearly is that you will exercise proper care, an assumption evidenced by the general lack of signs, barriers and controls of any kind. The result is a riding environment like that the cross-country racer faces, with the same effect: The rider gets sharper. No matter what your skill level the first day, by the seventh you will be far better at leaning your motorcycle, at judging turn radius, speed control, braking and passing—it is a matter of survival.

Complementing the terrain—natural and man-made—is the variety of human terrain. There is no single Alpine culture, even in Switzerland, and after a rush up and down a difficult pass, pulling into a little town is as refreshing as a dive into a pool after a hot day. It is axiomatic that you get out of such transactions what you put in, and coming to the Alps with a relaxed grin will get you the same in return, no matter what the language. Almost universally, our motorcycles were ice-breakers, objects of admiration. Just as women in Europe seem to think sunbathing is best done topless, so do many Europeans regard motorcycles decked out in touring gear as an enviable way to travel.

The camaraderie that traveling by bike engenders is especially acute in the Alps; by the third day, I'd lost count of the cheerful contacts with other riders. And the waves you get from passing riders aren't the raised fists of "Right-on, Bro" defiance, or marque- and status-conscious salutes, but eloquent signals of shared delights: The guy passing knows the secret joys of Alpine riding, and celebrates it with you. Sometimes—often, in fact—one rider stopped at a roadside cafe or breathtaking vista magnetizes



You must work hard on Alpine roads; danger is always there.

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others, and impromptu meetings result, in which moto-English usually suffices.

Yet, as captivating as the Alpine experience is, none of it comes free, either in money or sweat. You must work hard to dance the roads, at any speed, and the danger is always there: A missed shift, a misjudged braking maneuver, or any kind of slide can turn a get-off into a plummet into oblivion. Further, the passes change constantly; because the snow never melts entirely, a late-night or early-morning charge up the road means encountering great ice sheets, which must be scouted thoroughly and carefully crossed, often at less than a walking pace.

Traffic, too, is a hazard, especially tour buses going downhill, brakes at the limit and smoking, engines screaming in low gears, drivers using every inch of the tiny roadways. The concept of right-of-way goes over the side, so to speak, and so will the unwary rider. The rule becomes: Pass or die. That kind of hazard can loom as a disincentive to an Alpine tour; it

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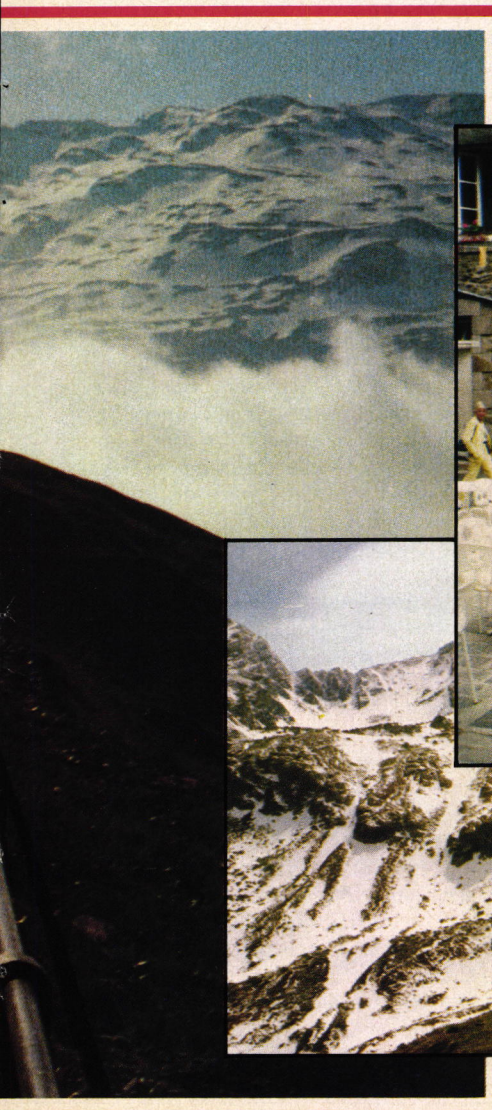
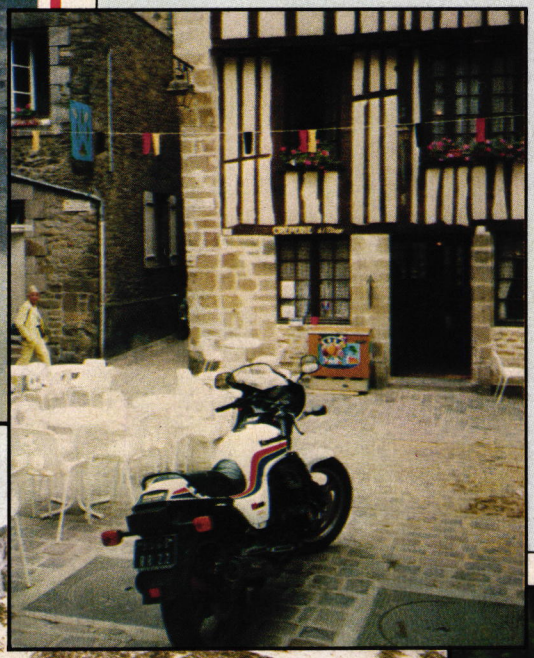
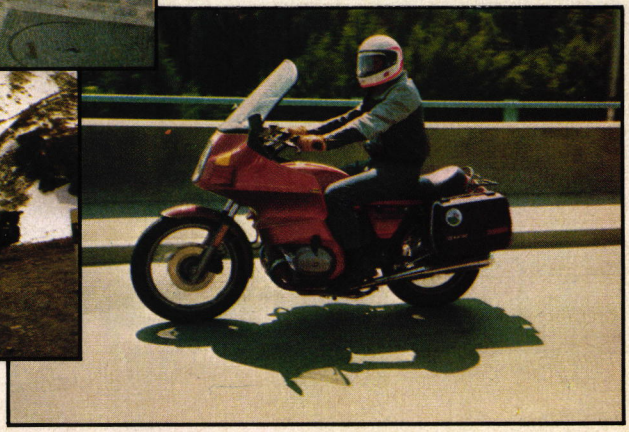






ALPINE TRIP TIPS

• Be prepared for any kind of weather. That means accessible raingear, as well as both warm and cool under-leathers clothing to take into account the dramatic change in air temperature typical of a climb from 300 feet to 9000 feet.

• Serious riding gear is a must. In America, a T-shirt and jeans might be acceptable touring gear, but you can't ride the Alps in such stuff. Europeans, almost without exception, dress in leather, neck to toe, and they're wise to do so, given the hazards. Further, because Europe is not offended by riders in leathers, you can zip up safely and still eat in a good restaurant. Besides, riding in full kit allows you to save your street clothes for walking and sightseeing.

• Your bike must be in top shape. The Furkapass is no place to discover that you have marginal tires.

• Don't worry about service stations, lodging or food. This isn't the Outback, and you can simply slide into a town and find a room with a bath and a bed. Also, the Alps are covered with campgrounds and bed-and-breakfast lodgings.

• English is the universal language, but your passage is greatly eased by survival phrases (and responses) in French, German and Italian.

• Carry currency from all the Alpine countries, as well as the Almighty Dollar. Because Europe is now as dependent on consumer credit as the United States, even small establishments usually accept VISA and MasterCard, while American Express and Diners Club work at bigger places. Even fuel on the main highways can be had with plastic, although U.S.-issued gas cards aren't universally accepted.

• Don't overestimate possible daily mileage on small roads. The Plesman Plan called for no more than 350km per day. If you absolutely, positively have to be there overnight, hook up with the motorway system—but be prepared to pay for the privilege of going fast and straight. In France, you stop about every 20-50km to pay (sometimes as much as $7), and in Italy, you'll endure a tiresome ritual involving buying an autostrada ticket from one booth, riding 100 yards and giving it to another boothmaster. Only Germany and Switzerland have toll-free superhighways.

• Don't expect to exceed the speed limits continually and not hear about it—especially urban limits. While the police aren't nearly so ubiquitous as in the United States, they *do* exist. You'll also find the European recommended maximum speeds for corners far more accurate than in America; here, a good rider might safely double the figure—in Europe he can't.

• Don't worry about parking. Most cities have two-wheel zones, and in congested areas you're expected to stick your bike on the sidewalk, under a tree—anywhere that gets it out of the way. You only come to the notice of the traffic cops if you park in a bus, taxi, no-standing or no-parking zone.

—Steve Thompson

shouldn't. Tales of buses cleaning off saddlebags and mirrors to the contrary, even the most sedate, vertical-riding Gold Wing pilot can experience the Alps without fear, because his mount, even in the vertical mode, is ideally fitted to the demands of the terrain.

Arranging that experience, as with anything worth doing, is not easily accomplished. The main problems break into logistics and costs. Under logistics comes the matter of how you get a bike to the start line. Ways can be found, but the best two are shipping your own bike or buying at the factory gate—something that works well at BMW, where the gate is only hours from the Alps. Details of the former are available from a travel agent, and the latter from dealers.

Costs are another matter, though they can be minimized by planning a tour when the currency exchange rates are in your favor. And while you can stay in large cities—and large hotels—smaller towns afford less-expensive alternatives. Fuel is more costly than in the United States, but because a bike—any bike—is so much more fuel-efficient under the stress of Alp-work than a car, filling up isn't a wallet-breaker. You can expect a drop of about 20 percent from your "normal" fuel economy on a run like ours, at

Alpine roads are God's gifts to motorcyclists, with a boundless array of surfaces, widths and speeds. Best of all, though, on Alpine passes motorcycles reign supreme.

RIDE GUIDE:

The Plesman Plan

Four years in the making, one week in the riding, and never to be forgotten.

• After wandering through the Alps in the summer, any rider should be convinced that there is no way, short of deliberate contrivance, to put together a bad ride there. But there is also the question of whether or not there is a *right* way. Someone who does not have annual access to the terrain will never find out; he needs help from someone who knows.

Bas Plesman knows. So when he offered to plan the Alpine trip, his offer was gladly accepted. In concert with Col. Jan Charms, he worked out a route that both encompassed the collected goals of the trip's riders, and reflected his four years of scouting and personal planning for the One True Alpine Ride.

The idea was to ride from Frankfurt to the French Riviera and back to Munich, using the most scenic passes and roads to do it. Autobahns, autoroutes and autostrade were to be used only as required. Still, because Plesman is a seasoned rider, and because he knows the rigors of Alpine riding, he planned breathing space between one strenuous stretch and the next. Few other itineraries will match the one evolved to meet the needs of the Gang, but Plesman's route still is useful as a starting point. The opinion after the ride was that the Plesman Plan was nothing short of perfect, and when circumstances forced two of the Gangsters to deviate from the route and take flanking highways, Plesman's choices were dramatically shown to have been superb. Broken down, our itinerary went like this (see map):

Day One: Frankfurt, Germany to Amsteg, Switzerland. This leg took us on autobahn from near the Frankfurt airport to the turnoff at Baden-Baden. Soon after, we were on the Schwarzwaldhochstrasse, the Black Forest High Road—a 30km stretch of smooth, fast, almost-deserted two-lane running along a ridge. From there, the road dropped lower, and stayed scenic (if less exciting) through Freudenstadt, Villingen, Donaueschingen and the Swiss border town of Schaffhausen, the site of the Rheinfall, a spectacular and tourist-crowded waterfall.

We lunched there on the Rheinfall lake, then rode through Zurich, along the Zuger See, and entered the glacial clefts of Switzerland at Altdorf. The group rendezvoused in Amsteg, with huge, mist-

least if you ride as hard as we did; back off, and you'll see a rise in economy. But backing off isn't what this ride was for. Even after the first heady flush of 130-mph streaking on the autobahn from Frankfurt to Baden-Baden, after the cathartic effects of speed without fear of reprisal had worn off, the special joy of this Alpine dream ride still was inevitably and inextricably linked to the special joys of riding a fast motorcycle hard.

Even in Switzerland and Austria, where radar traps marred the scenic beauty, the speed limits are so much higher than would be found on similar U.S. highways that a sport rider's grin need never slip. Once off the flatlands, once started up a climb to the breathless blue of an Alpine pass, the only limit to a rider's enjoyment is his imagination. And after the climb is made, once the tour buses and trucks and cars full of solemn passengers ogling the drops to nothingness are disposed of, even the least imaginative rider will switch off his engine and soak in the serenity of a world solely comprised of sky, stone, snow and God.

In that sublime moment, it does not matter whether the green valleys are Italian, French, Austrian, German or Swiss. What matters is the moment, and the way it was made. It was made—and could only be made—with a motorcycle. •

shrouded mountains looming overhead like brooding sentinels.

Day Two: Amsteg, Switzerland to Lanslebourg, France. Only an hour from Amsteg, we climbed the Furkapass (elevation 7994 feet). Here, we learned about the temperature drop, the traffic, the gravel, the washed-out roads and the rudimentary steps of the Alpiner road dance. Cresting the Grimselpass a little later, we had the rhythm, and when we descended to the lush Rhone river valley, we were eager for more. The run to Sion was mostly flat and fast, with castles sited along the river valley. From there, our road climbed to Martigny, then shot skyward to the Grand St. Bernard Pass, 8098 feet high. When we crested it and ran down the other side, we were in Italy, so we lunched in Aosta. In the midafternoon heat and sun, we rode slowly back up the hills to Pre-St.Didier, then again climbed to a pass—or "col" this time—the Petit St. Bernard.

I sped on down the mountain, through the town of Seez, France, to gas up and wait for the others in Bourg St. Maurice, where we'd planned to regroup to decide if we wanted to cross the Col d'Iseran to spend the night in Lanslebourg. I missed them, though, and spent the night in the Hotel Concorde alone, while they went on over the icy pass and stopped in Lanslebourg. I started over the hill at 5:30 the next morning—and discovered the truth of water turning to ice at night at more than 9000 feet.

Day Three: Lanslebourg, France, to Opio, France. This route took us over a total of four passes along the French Alpine border to the Riviera. At Castellane, we joined the Route Napoleon, where all traces of the cool Alpine air evaporated, and the red-tile roofs and heat haze told us better than a tour guide that we were nearing the Mediterranean. Then, after cresting the Pas de la Faye, we found our way to Opio.

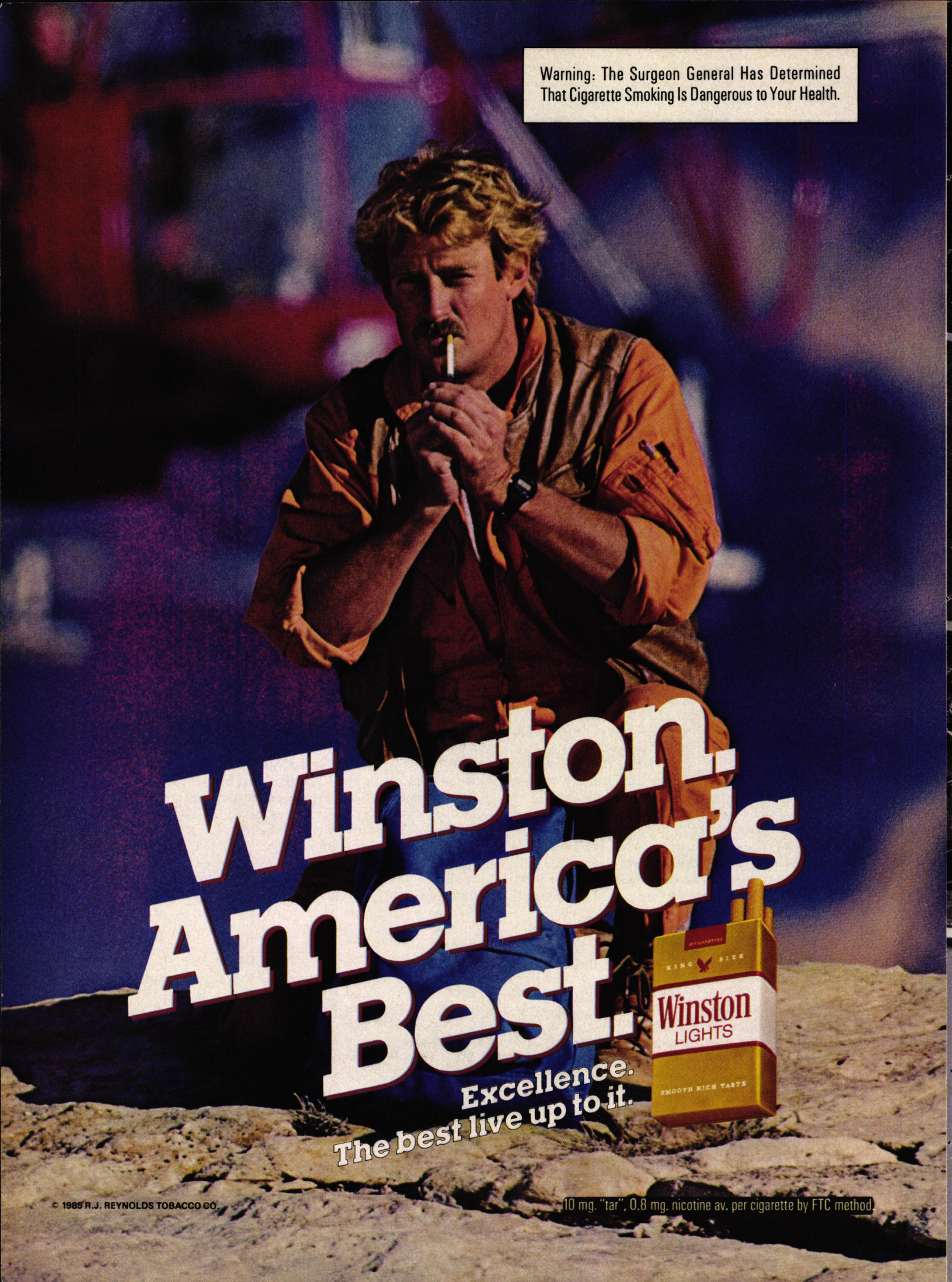
Day Four: A rest day on the rocky beaches in Cannes and Nice.

Day Five: Opio to Como, Italy. Plesman and Charms left for Holland, while the Americans headed for Italy. The route wound along the Cote d'Azur, glittering like a tourist postcard with brilliant whites, cobalt blues, tile reds, and in the distance, Monte Carlo. We rode through the Italian border, and started up the most beautiful valley of the ride, along the Tende River, through the Tende Tunnel and then into Italy. We took the autostrada around Torino, then to Milano, and headed to Lake Como.

Day Six: Como, Italy, to St. Moritz, Switzerland. We rode up the shore, then out onto the Chiavenna plain, across the Swiss border at Castasegna, then onto a lush pasture, where we sacked out near a stream for an hour. From there, we climbed the Malojapass and then rose with the terrain to the Silvaplauna See and St. Moritz, the great ski resort.

Day Seven: St. Moritz, Switzerland, to Peiting, Germany. On this stretch we deviated from the Plesman Plan, eliminating the long loop back through the Italian Alps and the Stelvio Pass. As we progressed through the Austrian Alps, we rejoined Plesman's route, and again encountered spectacular scenery, food and drink. That night we stopped at a modern German road house.

Day Eight: Peiting to Munich. The American contingent split up. I rode through the lovely farmland near Munich, then past the Starnberger See and finally to the center city. In the process, I missed—by getting off the Plesman route—mad king Ludwig's fairy-tale castles in Neuschwanstein. By then, my senses were too drunk to react properly, anyway. You can only absorb so much in a week; so much superb food, drink and spectacular scenery. I decompressed from 1700 miles of spectacle. It was a tough job, admittedly. But somebody had to do it. —*Steve Thompson*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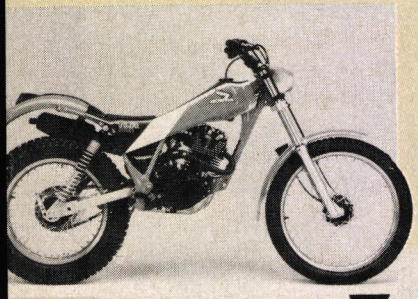
OFF-ROAD

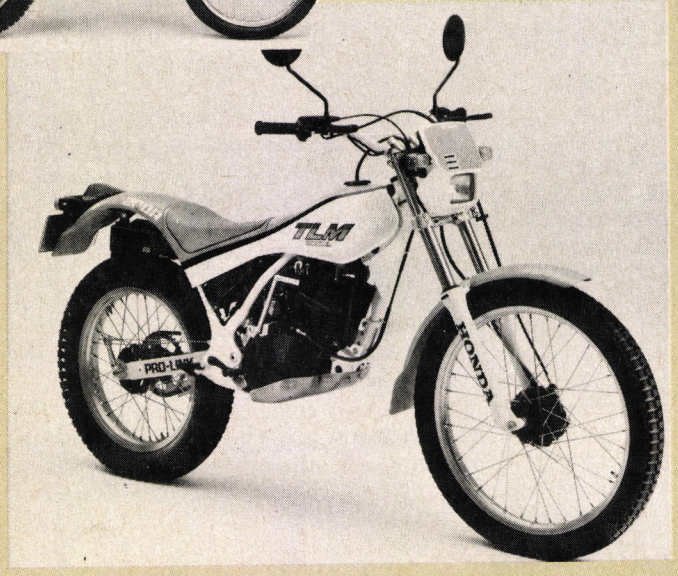
Monthly Proof that Man Does Not Live by Tarmac Alone

Trial Period

• Remember the trials boom that swept the United States in the early '70s? The major manufacturers remember it, too, but as the biggest bust in modern motorcycling. What had been touted as the wave of motorcycling's future never reached these shores, and most of the trials bikes the manufacturers thought would sell like ice cream on a sweltering day moldered away in warehouses. And so, snakebit on the subject of trials, the big firms have stayed away in droves—at least until now.

The excitement being raised—in admittedly diminutive circles—about Yamaha's new TY350 has given rise to speculation about another trials invasion, though one on a much smaller scale than the last. Several manufacturers are said to be waiting to see how the Yamaha is received before dipping a toe in what proved to be icy waters a decade ago. And if the TY passes muster, you can bet Honda won't be far behind in offering a trials bike of its own. Or maybe two.





For example, if things pan out, you might very well see the TLR250 in Honda dealerships soon. The bike's six-speed, 249cc SOHC four-valve engine is identical to that developed by Honda Racing Corp. for its RTL250 works bike, and produces a claimed 15 horsepower at 6000 rpm. Also a lift from works hardware are straight-spoke wheels, a fork with 35mm-diameter stanchion tubes and Michelin radial tires. In addition, the twin-shock TLR reportedly tips the scales at less than 190 pounds, and has 310mm of ground clearance.

It also has a new two-stroke stablemate, the TLM200R. Weight for the TLM is said to be almost identical to the TLR's, but that's about where the similarities end. For instance, the two-stroke TLM has a version of Honda's Pro-Link rear suspension and an air-assisted fork. Engine output for the air-cooled single is a claimed 13 horsepower at 5000 rpm, with strong low-rpm power as a result of a huge flywheel.

Still, you might never see *either* of those Hondas if the TY350 fails to attract much interest. But from what's already being said about the new Yamaha, maybe you'd better save a plonker-size space in the garage—just in case.

—Larry Works

Tiger On The Loose

• Japanese ATVs, of both the three- and four-wheel variety, already roam the plains in vast herds. But there's a new ATV on the prowl, one of a completely different stripe. It's the Tiger 500, and not only is it a new entry in the ATV jungle, it's also made in America—the only U.S.-built Open-class three-wheeler, according to its manufacturers. The firm also touts the beast's tame nature, but the Tiger's specifications tell a different story: 52 horsepower, from a five-speed Rotax motor. Also included are Magura controls, front and rear dual-piston hydraulic disc brakes and remote-reservoir Fox Shock. Such attributes clearly speak of competition, but it might take awhile for the Tiger to prove its racing bloodline, since the first of the breed rolled off Tiger ATV Ltd.'s Eagan, Minnesota, assembly line at the end of March.

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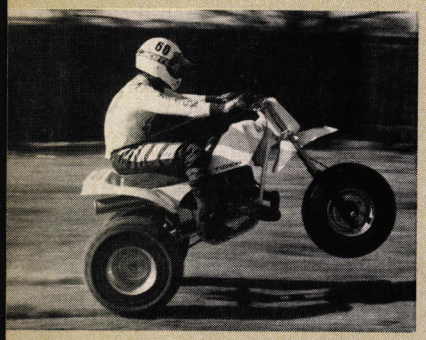


The half-liter version isn't the only three-wheeler in the firm's menagerie, either. There also are 200cc and 250cc versions—both powered by liquid-cooled Rotax motors (with respective claimed horsepower ratings of 34 hp and 45 hp)—and a liquid-cooled 125, the Rocket, on the way. A quarter-liter liquid-cooled four-wheeler is in the offing, too, said to be ready in the next few months. We'll see, because racing—with however many wheels—is nothing if not survival of the fittest. *—Larry Works*

PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Moto-X-Fox Roost-D-Flector

Protection from a rock and a hard place.

• Motocross can be a downright brutal sport, and few things underscore that fact quite like the roost from an Open-classer's rear tire. Even hard-slung sand can make life miserable, and fighting off a moto-long stream of rocks coming from a 5.10 rear tire will make almost any motocross racer feel like he's gone the distance with Marvin Hagler.

To help ward off such attacks, Moto-X-Fox offers the Roost-D-Flector, an all-plastic armor shell that could take some of the sting out of even Marvelous Marvin's punches. In short, the D-Flector is a multipiece plastic design that offers protection for your chest, back, shoulders and upper arms. There's also thick nylon-covered padding suspended in the shoulder cups, for extra impact resistance.

But before you can wear the D-Flector, you have to assemble it. Short, webbed nylon straps hold the back, front and shoulder sections together; the straps pass through slots in the plastic pieces, and are secured by plastic pegs. Initial assembly does take a few minutes, but the system's advantage is that it allows near-custom fitting for a variety of body sizes. And indeed, the D-Flector will fit most racers well, but if you're especially broad-shouldered, it will leave part of your neck bared to flying dirt and rocks.

Despite that shortcoming, the Roost-D-Flector does its job admirably, thanks in part to its design, which provides a rock-absorbing air space between its convex plastic panels and your

chest. Fox also claims that feature allows efficient airflow for good cooling. And riding 30-minute motos in 90 degree weather confirmed that the D-Flector will help you keep your cool when the heat is on. What's more, an unplanned high-side showed that the suspended material inside the shoulder pads does a good job of absorbing energy in a fall.

So if you're looking for a way to make your off-road riding a less punishing affair, try climbing into a Roost-D-Flector. It's a good-fitting piece of hardware that's well-suited to warding off rock attacks—even if Marvin Hagler himself is doing the roosting. *—David Dewhurst*

Moto-X-Fox Roost-D-Flector
Manufacturer: Moto-X-Fox, 520 McGlincy Lane, Campbell, California 95008
Suggested retail price: $55.00
Available colors: red, blue, yellow, white or white/blue, white/red, yellow/blue and yellow/black

TRIALS TEST:

Yamaha TY350

Don't start the revolution without me.

BY DAVID DEWHURST

• Back in the early '70s, some people predicted that observed trials would sweep America and become *the* great off-road sport. But the prophets turned out to be dead wrong, and when the great trials explosion fizzled, part of the blame was laid on the expensive and unreliable European trials bikes, while others pointed to Japanese trials machinery that was less than perfect.

Now some people are predicting the second coming of trials to America. Nobody's foolish enough to say it's going to become *the* off-road sport anymore, but Yamaha's unveiling of the TY350 should create plenty of interest. That's because, unlike many trials bikes of the '70s, the TY350 is not expensive, it's reliable and—most important—it's the most competitive trials bike ever to come from Japan.

Don't look for any innovative designs to account for the TY's brilliance, though. Everything about the bike, from its reed-valve 341.8cc motor to its sin-

gle-shock rear suspension, has been seen before in trials. But Yamaha has combined all those pieces into a bike that brings a knowing smile when you ride it.

That smile starts the minute you straddle the TY's seat. The TY feels *narrow,* thanks mainly to its Monocross rear suspension. Without the external shock mounts, bulbous side panels and wide rear frame rails of twin-shock bikes, the TY can accommodate even the most energetic body English. And the bike's low center of gravity and tiny proportions only add to the illusion that the TY is much smaller than a 350. There's good reason for that impression, too, because the 350 *is* based on a smaller machine; it's basically a big-bore version of the TY250 that's been available in Europe for more than a year.

The TY's small, nimble feeling also is evident in the way the bike steers effortlessly around tight sections. Aided by its state-of-the-art Michelin tires and excellent suspension, the 350 simply tracks wherever it's pointed. The bike steers well even at higher trail speeds, too, although the softly sprung rear shock can't always handle large holes. But Yamaha didn't design the TY as a dual-purpose bike; its razor-thin seat, soft rear spring and low, flat handlebar attest to that. And in the harsh reality of a trials section, everything works just the way you'd want it to.

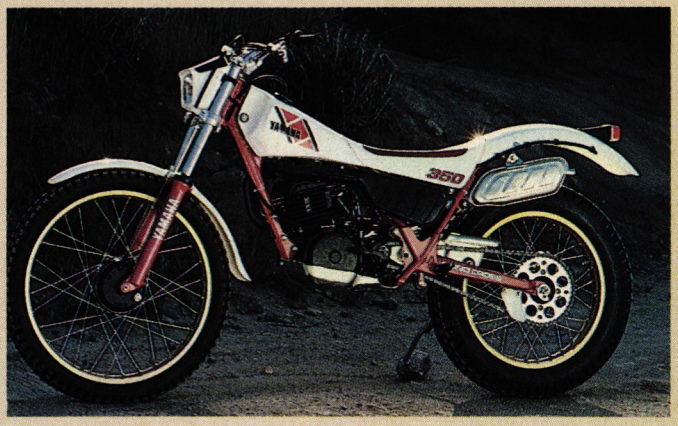
Plonking between rocks and tree roots also shows that the compact motor is just as finely honed as the TY's excellent chassis. Yamaha hit on a near-perfect combination of porting, ignition curve and flywheel weight to make the 350 produce traction-finding power that trials riders only used to dream of. Changing the stock #37 pilot jet to a #42 made the motor even better, by eliminating a slight surge during closed-throttle situations.

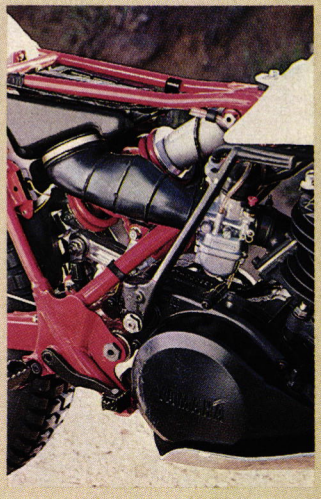
Closing the throttle points up the TY's heavy flywheel inertia, too, which can be a problem in aggressive riding. The large flywheels, modified from those in Yamaha's YZ490, try to keep spinning after a high-speed attack on a section. Consequently, a tight turn immediately after a fast section calls for quick clutch action and hard braking to get things slowed down.

But the TY has plenty of stopping power for most trials situations. Not even water can reduce that power either, because Yamaha endowed the bike with water-resistant front and rear brakes. Plus, the brake arm for the front drum is mounted *inside* the backing plate, where it's shielded from rocks and tree branches.

Yet such attention to detail makes the TY's minor problems stand out even more. For example, the front of the exhaust pipe needs to be be tucked farther out of the way, and the frame rails supporting the rear fender could be longer to provide a better hand-hold. Other niggling glitches include a shift lever that broke almost immediately due to poor welding, and the small metal loop around the chain-tensioner roller, which bends easily and then jams the roller.

Annoying as those little problems are, though, they can't diminish the Yamaha's greatness one whit. And the magical way the TY350 helps you clean a rough, gnarly section can make you forget its imperfections. What's more, Americans are buying TY's faster than Yamaha expected, and the Japanese competition is taking notice of that success. As a result, even more serious trials bikes are certain to arrive in 1986. So it seems the TY350 just might start the trials revolution—15 years after everyone predicted it. ●





YAMAHA TY350

Importer: Yamaha Motor Corp. U.S.A.
6555 Katella Ave.
Cypress, California 90630

Category	trials
Suggested retail price	$2499
Engine type	two-stroke vertical single
Port arrangement	one reed-valve-controlled intake, four main transfers, one booster transfer, one exhaust
Bore and stroke	80.0mm x 68.0mm
Displacement	341.8cc
Compression ratio (corrected)	5.3:1
Carburetion	one 26mm Teikei slide/needle
Gearbox	6-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	Kayaba, 36mm stanchion tube diameter/6.5 in. (164mm)
Rear shock/wheel travel	Yamaha, 5-position adjustable spring preload/4.8 in. (122mm)
Weight	193 lbs. (87.5kg)
Wheelbase	51.5 to 52.3 in. (1308 to 1328mm)
Seat height	29.6 in. (752mm)
Steering head angle	23.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	1.93 in. (49mm)
Warranty	90 days on engine, frame and suspension only
Available color	white only

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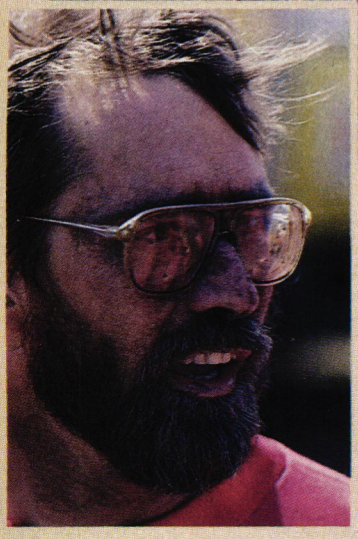

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A LAMB TO THE SLAUGHTER

The Alligator Enduro

Trapped in the jaws of Florida's Alligator.

BY JIM MILLER

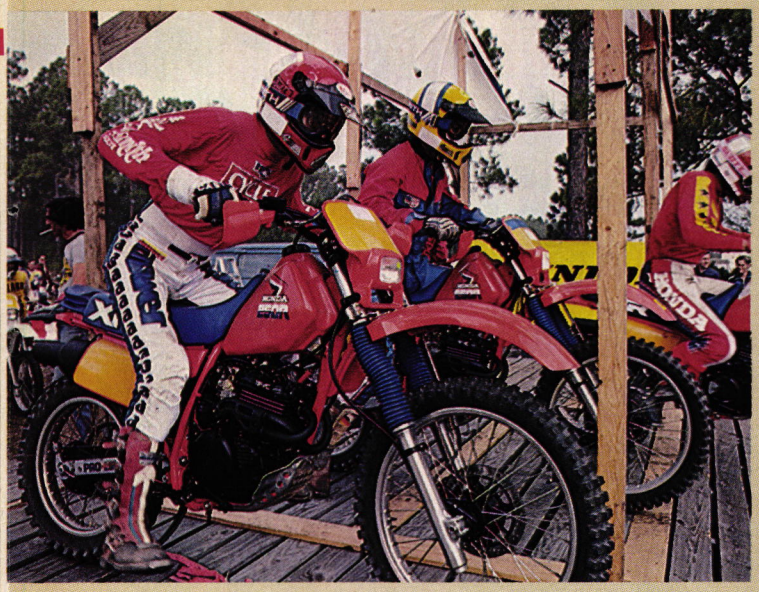
• "Heah-ah-aH-AH-HEAH-HEAH-HEAH," the guy behind sounded as frantic as a five-year-old outside a department-store restroom. I'd been hearing this clown get closer for the past two minutes, but was afraid to turn around because as soon as I did I knew some branch would skewer me like a Ballpark Frank at a Kiwanis Club picnic. Now that the trail had widened to the point where he could get by without the two of us snarling handlebars like two reindeer locking antlers, he started his chant. I eased over to the right, just far enough to bash my hand against a passing tree and kill the motor on the XR. A flash of yellow and white shot by on the left, leaving a cloud of two-stroke exhaust and the word "Thanks" hanging in the air. "Yeah," I thought, "no problem," pulled off my fogged goggles and reached for the kickstarter.

What the hell was I doing here? I mean, it all started innocently enough, with a phone call from Gary La Plante of American Honda. "A bunch of us are considering getting some of you magazine guys together to run the Alligator Enduro during Cycle Week in Daytona. You interested?" Gary asked.

Now, I take to off-road riding like a duck to an oil spill. My only other enduro experience consisted of one "family style" event that left me bruised and aching for days. But since that debacle had taken place more than a year ago, the memories had faded so that I failed to recognize the danger. I took up the challenge with the same ignorance a pig shows for the name Oscar Mayer.

The only other person I knew who'd run the Alligator was Ron Lawson, and because he was the one who volunteered me to La Plante, I figured Ron owed me some kind of explanation as to what, exactly, I'd gotten into. He'd run the enduro a couple of years ago, and his bike had drowned out 20 miles into the course. "If it doesn't rain during the week, it probably won't be too bad," Lawson said. "But there's no chance it won't rain."

Well, it didn't rain, and for that I'm eternally grateful, because for me, the ride was an abject lesson in the lemmas and corollaries of Murphy's law. Things started off badly when the Honda group (with me and several others in tow) showed up for sign-in the day before, and the AMA had us starting an hour later than we originally had been told. Some frantic negotiating by Honda's Dirk Vandenberg got us



reassigned to an earlier time, which meant the course wouldn't be torn up by another hour's worth of riders. That made the others happy, but I was of two minds about the new time. It meant there would be another 200 or so riders behind me who'd eventually be whistling and hooting to pass, but I also figured it gave the search party another hour of light to find me. A fair trade.

I had plenty of time to ponder that swap, too. On the day of the race we arrived an hour early, and after getting dressed I had 45 minutes before my key time—enough to breed several generations of monarchs and swallowtails in my intestines, until the flutter of tiny wings almost drowned out the XR250's exhaust note at the start. Finding out that the Husqvarna team—including Roeseler, Cunningham *and* Burleson—was starting four minutes behind me didn't help. I didn't want to end up as the twit who bunted three national enduro champions into the weeds when he crashed trying to get out of their way.

The Alligator gave me plenty of opportunities to crash, too, and I took advantage of most of them. Street riders never seem to understand the cornucopia of crash styles off-road riding has to offer. One of the most common is the long, greasy slide you're sure you can save, right up to the point where you find yourself pinned under the bike, with the exhaust pipe searing a hole in your nylon riding pants. Most of the time, though, you don't get that much warning, particularly when you try to stuff a 30-inch-wide handlebar through a 28-inch gap between two trees.

In addition to trees, the Alligator offered its own variations with palmettos, which are bristling, thorny, munchkin-like little mutant palm trees. Palmettos won't necessarily *make* you crash, but the whipping they give you on your way through them makes you wish you had. I became quite intimate with those leafy obstacles, usually while I was trying to get out of the way of someone hooting to pass. If I tried to stay ahead, I'd inevitably wind up with the bike bounding back and forth through the sandy whoops, eventually pitching me off the course, rear-tire first. After an hour or so, I'd simply bow to the inevitable, and when someone came up to pass I'd ram into the palmettos on my own; at least then I could pick soft spots to fall.

Between crashes I had my hands full simply trying to follow the course. Apparently, the course workers ran out of signs for left and right turns, because after the first 10 miles, the trail was marked with dozens of arrows, tilted in different directions. They were easy enough to follow, but it was a bit disconcerting to be slogging through a 120 degree corner and pass by an arrow pointing left prominently announcing, "straight."

Between my confusion on the course and my contusions off the course, I quit making any attempt at timekeeping. When the route sheet's sitting at 17.2, the odometer reads 31.7 and the clock's running at 2:07:46, figuring a 24-mph average takes on the magnitude of a differential equation. By that time, things were getting desperate; I knew I couldn't finish the entire 66 miles. The only way to save face was to break the motorcycle. Yet no matter how I abused the XR, it refused to quit running and give me some honorable way to DNF. I'll never forgive it for that.

After several miles of utter disregard for shift points, the clutch and the 250's pinging, it dawned on me that I hadn't crashed in at least 15 minutes. I actually began to think I might make the gas stop at mile 41. The thought scared me, because the 10-minute rest would probably give me a second wind so that I could get another 6 miles down the trail, and I'd die just that much farther from civilization.

Fortunately, at that point another rider came up to pass, and in my haste to get out of his way I lofted the XR's front wheel—something I hadn't been able to do intentionally all day. In the process, I pirouetted off a palmetto and T-boned a large birch tree. Any thoughts of finishing were gone; in fact, for several minutes, *any thoughts* were gone. It took me 20 minutes to get the overturned XR extricated from that tree, five of them figuring out *how* to get it untangled. After that length of time, I was sure the XR would be flooded beyond any hope of starting, but the impudent s.o.b. fired after three kicks. I didn't care; I was through.

My spirits weren't buoyed by the fact that I was the *only one* in our group who didn't finish. Even Honda's Tom Hicks, the only guy with less dirt riding experience than I had, had finished. It was enough to make me give up smoking for at least 20 minutes. During that time I started to take stock, and included in my extensive collection of bruises and abrasions, I'd dented my left shin. Something like that isn't easily forgotten, but I couldn't remember where or when I'd collected it. There were too many possibilities, and it hurt to think about them.

Over the next couple of days I struggled out of my hotel room long enough to watch the roadraces, and wander around the pits picking "things" out of my teeth that I'd never eaten—at least, not intentionally. But I couldn't muster the courage to watch the Daytona Supercross; somehow, watching a bunch of guys *race* over terrain no one else would want to *walk* over didn't appeal to me. It brought back too many painful memories. After I got back to California, though, I started to pause as I passed some of the dirtbikes in the shop, throwing a leg over some and twisting the throttle on others. Maybe next year, if I start training early. . . . On the other hand, maybe I'll go down and watch the ducks swim around the oil tankers. ●

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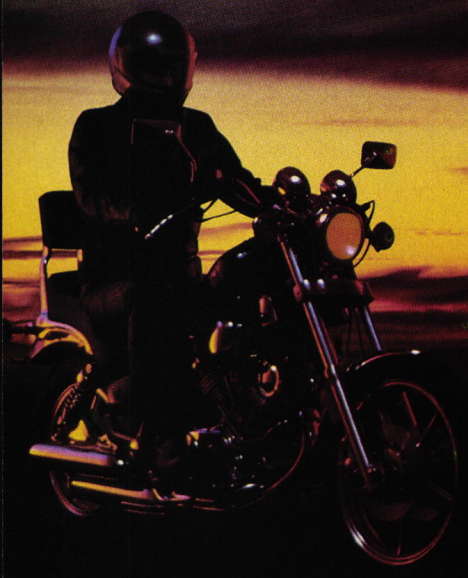

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SPORT LINES

Cycle Guide's True Tales of Racecourses, Dark Horses and Machines at Speed

BY DAIN GINGERELLI

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1985 TOM RILES

Pro Stock

Racing's best-kept secret.

• Terry Vance boards his Suzuki GS1150E and fires up the engine. The instant the four wide-mouth carburetors spit gas and air into the engine's intake ports, and the chrome four-into-one exhaust pipe booms a sharp, echoing blast, it's obvious Vance's bike isn't like any GS1150E you'd find on a Suzuki dealer's showroom floor. Sure, the custom-painted gas tank says "Suzuki" on its side, and the bike's headlight is attached to the fork. But any further resemblance to a stocker ends right there.

Vance's machine is a Pro Stock dragbike. It is low, and stretches more than 10 feet from front wheel to wheelie bar. Yet when the 6-foot-2 rider sits in the saddle, he has to fold up his legs, looking much like a sprinter does in the starting blocks before making a 100-meter dash—which is close to what Vance is preparing to do. In his case, though, the sprint covers a quarter-mile, and his GS1150E will cover that distance quicker than Carl Lewis could propel himself in the 100-meter dash. In fact, Vance holds the International Drag Bike Association (IDBA) Pro Stock record of 8.28 seconds at 161.14 mph. Even so, apart from dragracing enthusiasts, few people know about that.

But insiders in the South and along the East Coast regard Pro Stock as *the* class to watch for close, light-to-light racing. Top Fuel produces some heart-stopping moments for riders and fans alike, and Funny Bike is sure to keep the beer lines short at the concession stands for a few minutes, but when it comes to head-knocking, hard-nosed dragracing, hardly another professional class can boast the intensity of Pro

Continued

Some thoughts on lubrication from Robert H. Wehman, president and chief engineer of Spectro Oils of America.

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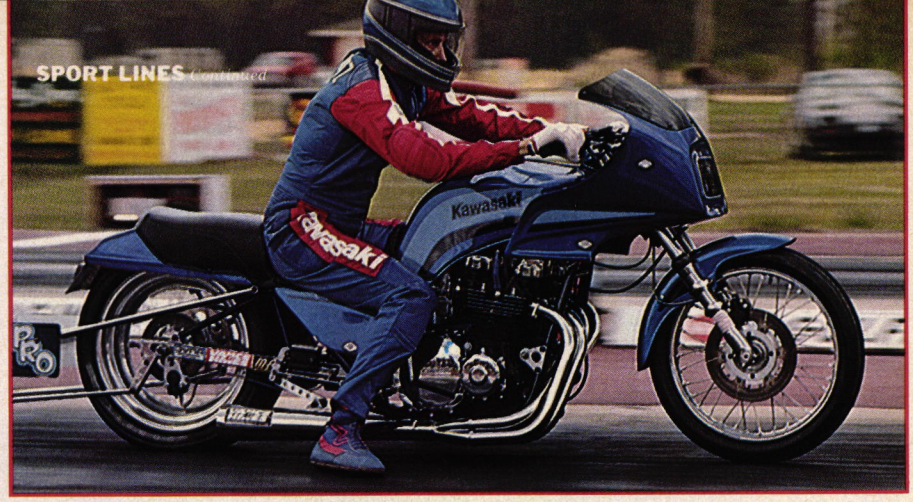


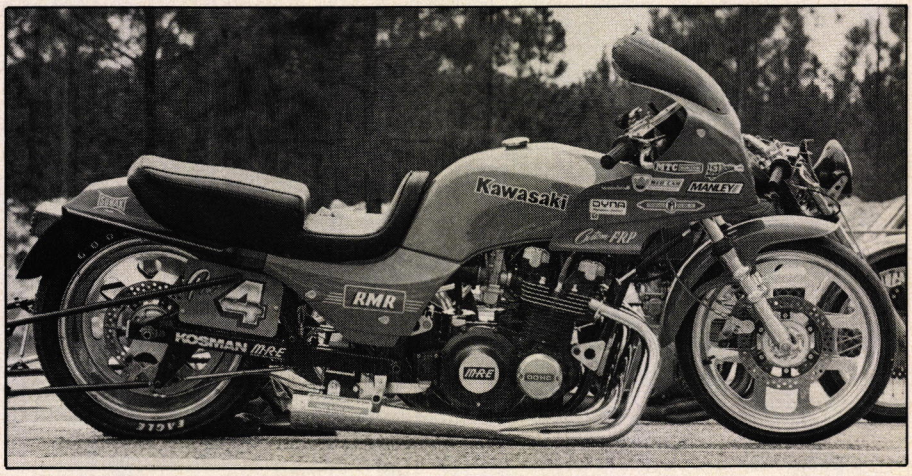
IDBA Pro Stock rules help two-valve engines compete with the four-valvers

Keeping the odds in everybody's favor.

Stock. Generally, there are 20 to 30 bikes vying for the 16 qualifying slots at a major meet; that's four, five, sometimes six *times* the number of competitive bikes in either Top Fuel or Funny Bike.

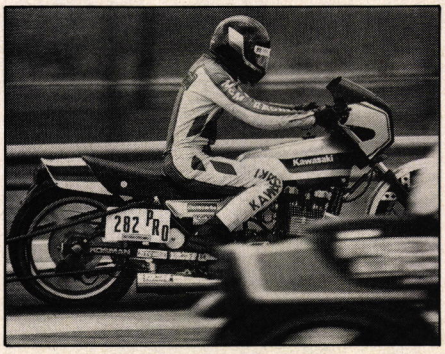
Earning a slot in that 16-bike field is tough, too. Usually, less than 0.5 second separates the fastest qualifier from No. 16. The competition is so fierce that at the 1985 IDBA season opener at Gulfport, Mississippi, even former class champion Bob Carpenter couldn't make the cut. In fact, Carpenter's remark moments before he made his qualifying attempt proved prophetic. "If a rider hits a light (leaves exactly when the light changes), and the other guy doesn't, he's gone," he said. The racing is that close.

Pro Stock has become dragracing's most competitive class for several reasons. For instance, the rules are simple and easy to understand, with no loopholes for competitors to sneak through as in, say, the AMA's Superbike class. Further, one of the prime directives of IDBA's Pro Stock class is that the bikes must resemble their showroom brethren—from a distance—in both bodywork and frame configuration. According to Tony Lee, IDBA's national race director, Pro Stock "was developed to be a street-



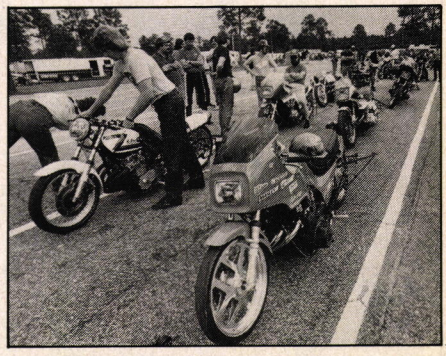
From 15 feet away, Randy Mason's Kawasaki GPz1100 looks familiar

But show it a green light and the bike changes into a racer.



There's always close racing in Pro Stock

A secret that'll be hard to keep.



A staging lane filled with Pro Stocks

The largest field in pro dragracing.

The Name Game

• Motorcycle dragracers speak a language all their own, and their jargon usually makes sense only to others of their kind. But with a little reasoning, it's easy to decipher the buzzwords and phrases.

For instance, when a racer talks about a "sit-up motorcycle," he's referring to a bike that allows its rider to sit, rather than lay, on the seat and frame. A "full-shift bike" is easy to figure out, too: It has a multi-speed transmission, as opposed to a one-speed unit Top Fuelers use.

But the dragracer's lingo becomes a bit harder to get a handle on when terms such as "haze," "hitting a tree" or "hitting a light" are thrown in. Still, deductive reasoning suggests that "haze" is to spin the rear tire on a slippery track. And, of course, any good rider never "hits a tree" lest he be disqualified for leaving the starting line too soon, or redlighting. A rider can cheer when he "hits a light," though, because then he has timed his start perfectly with the green light.

Of course, all the talk stops when the racing starts. And in that respect, at least, dragracing is like any other form of motorsport competition.

—Dain Gingerelli

Randy Mason's sit-up Pro Stock GPz

Lost in a haze, before hitting a light.

appearing class. The rules say that from 15 feet it (the bike) must look stock." In addition, IDBA also regulates the competition with weight-to-cubic-inch formulas, so that two-valve and pushrod engines can compete on equal terms with four-valve motors. As defending class champion, "Superbike" Mike Keyte put it, "The rules make it a game of weights and displacement."

But perhaps the most important factor in making Pro Stock such a competitive class is the tuner talent. "There's no question," said Lee, "the most expert and careful tuners are in Pro Stock." Headlining the list is Byron Hines of Vance & Hines Racing. "My advantage," said Vance, who rides the V&H Pro Stockers, "is having Byron Hines tune it (the bike)." Most other riders agree.

Even with Hines tuning the engines, though, Vance doesn't have a monopoly on the class. "Terry Vance can be beat," Keyte said. "At times he's inconsistent." And the human element, mixed with the mechanical parity produced by the rules, leaves the winner's circle wide open in Pro Stock racing. As Carpenter said about Pro Stock, "It's the least predictable in terms of who will win of all the pro classes."

And with such a combination—clearly stated rules, top-flight tuners and good, close racing—it should only be a matter of time before the word spreads about Pro Stock. Racing this good is just too hard to keep a secret.

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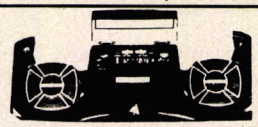

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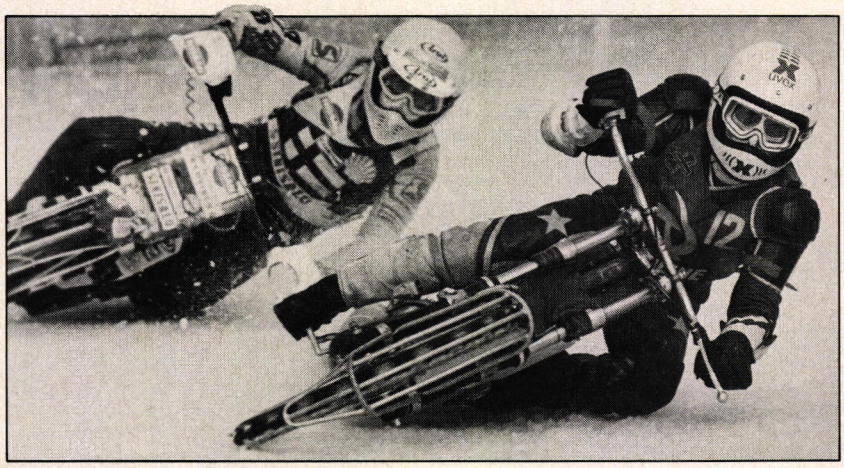
Pit Bits



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Cold War's Vladimir Suchov

Conquering the world of ice racing.

• Comrade Champion: Vladimir Suchov of the Soviet Union wrapped up the ice speedway world championship on March 10. Suchov joins six former Soviet ice speedway world champions, showing that if the Cold War were contested on a racetrack, Russia might just have the inside line on the rest of the world.

• Stone the Crows: The finest roadracers of the British Commonwealth and the United States tangled once again in the annual TransAtlantic Match Races over Easter weekend. Last year, the Yanks handed the British team a crushing defeat, but for '85 the British returned the favor, beating the American team soundly, 336 points to 254. As consolation for the Yanks, Randy Mamola was top scorer of the six-race series at Donington Park, with Australian Wayne Gardner placing second and Mike Baldwin, AMA roadrace champion, finishing third.

• Bruce Penhall returns: Two-time speedway World Champion Bruce Penhall was named manager of the 1985 U.S. speedway team. The four-man team confronts four other national teams during the World Team Cup Final on August 10, at Long Beach Veterans Stadium in Long Beach, California.

• For singles only: Motorcycle roadracing is gaining popularity in Mexico, and to show its support of racing in the *streets,* Mexico's Department of Tourism is endorsing La Carrera International Road Race. La Carrera is open to sports cars and motorcycles, but, to keep speeds down, only single-cylinder four-stroke motorcycles of up to 600cc will be allowed to compete. The race will be run on October 5, over a 145-mile paved highway connecting San Felipe, a fishing village on the Gulf of California, to the resort town of Ensenada on the west coast of the Baja California peninsula. For rules concerning the race, write to Editorial Gran Premio, S.C., Montevideo 303-408, Col. Lindavista, C.P. 07300, Mexico, D.F.

• California Superbike School: If your favorite roadrace track gets crowded this year, you might have the California Superbike School to blame. According to CSS's proctor, Keith Code, the school's aim is to license 800 riders by the end of 1985. And to that end, both beginner and advanced CSS classes will be held at most AMA National and Pro-Am tracks in the United States. In addition, the CSS-sponsored Rom Lovil Memorial Challenge Race for selected privateer racers will be run at the Loudon Classic, June 16.

• King Kenny the car racer: Kenny Roberts joined several retired *car* racers, and celebrities such as rock star Eddie Van Halen, actor Lorenzo Lamas and the New York Jets' Mark Gastineau, for the Toyota Pro-Celebrity Race at the Long Beach Grand Prix last April. Roberts spun his car while following Dan Gurney and finished seventh in the 16-car field. Shortly after the race, former Indianapolis 500-winner Parnelli Jones, who was behind Roberts when he spun, said to KR, "You were driving good out there."

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Kenny Roberts leads Parnelli Jones

"Oh, what a feeling."

Continued

Pit Bits

• KR on an FZR: It appears that Roberts' racing days on *motorcycles* are not over yet. Roberts has discussed with Yamaha the possibility of racing at the Suzuka Eight Hour endurance race on July 28, aboard an FZR750-based bike. Wayne Rainey probably will be his co-rider. But Suzuka could turn out to be Roberts' *second* race since his retirement last July. His first? The Laguna Seca National. Although he hasn't committed to either event, he noted that Laguna is "still under discussion." He'll ride a Yamaha YZR500 vee-four *if* he races there.

• Laguna legacy: Roberts has good reason to ride the Laguna Seca National, too; no one else has been as successful at that race as he has. Only two men have won Laguna more than once: Roberts (1974, '75, '78, '79, '80, '82 and '84) and Randy Mamola (1981 and '83). Other winners include Cal Rayborn (1972), Gary Nixon (1973), Steve Baker (1976) and Skip Aksland (1977).

Pro Rider Benefit Fund T-shirt

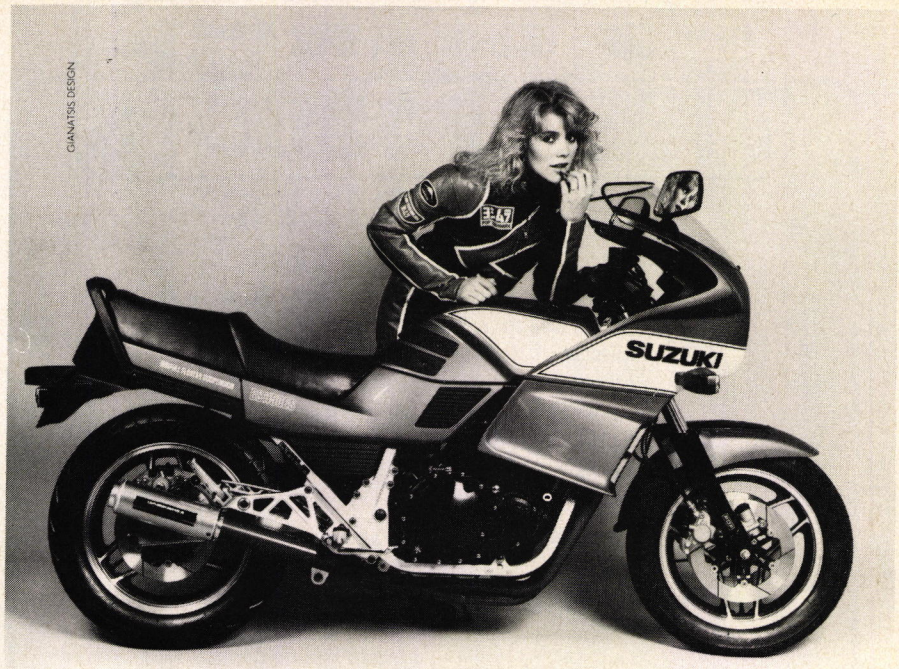
Tax deductible and easy to clean.

• T-shirts for tax breaks: An investment of $9.95 (plus $2.00 for handling) will get you a red-blue-and-black T-shirt from the Motorcycle Dealernews Pro Rider Benefit Fund. All proceeds from the sales go into the benefit fund to help injured professional riders pay their medical expenses. You can order the T-shirts (sizes S-XL) from The Pro Rider Benefit Fund, P.O. Box 1486, Van Nuys, California 91405. Your donation is tax deductible, too.

• Quote Department: After Harley-Davidson-rider Gene Church won the Daytona Battle of the Twins roadrace, he commented on his dice with former World Champion Marco Lucchinelli (Cagiva). "I didn't know who he was, but I knew he was one hell of a rider."

—Dain Gingerelli

Continued



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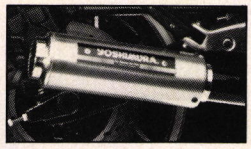

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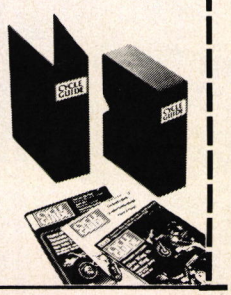

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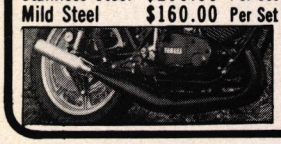

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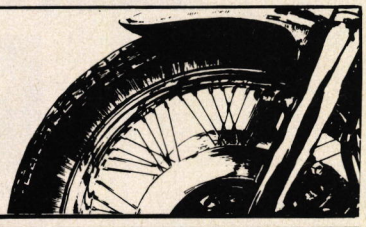

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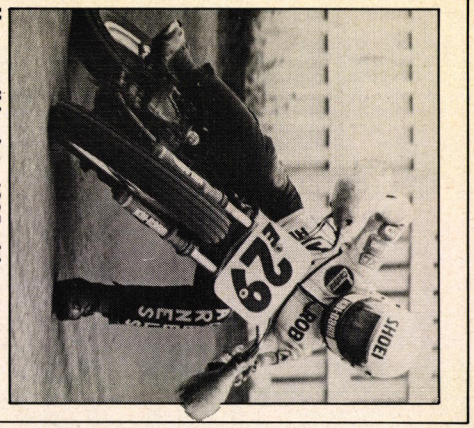
Rob Hassey in search of 20 more points

There's always something in the way.

• Nobody told AMA junior-ranked racer Rob Hassey that the road to expert ranking would be easy. But what he experienced this past winter makes the trials of Job look like a cakewalk. To start with, Hassey ended his 1984 season with 60 points, far from the total of 80 points necessary for his expert license. And to a privateer with an aging Harley-Davidson XR750, the 80 points he needed for '85 seemed like 8000.

Hassey's life appeared to take an upward turn last winter, though, when he secured a sponsor—a *real* sponsor—for the coming season. Warren Harley-Davidson, an Ohio dealer active in Class C racing for many years, agreed to help the young California rider by providing him with a fresh XR750 to race. Hassey would only have to supply his own van to haul the team's bike to the races. Suddenly, the 80 points he needed for that expert license no longer seemed completely out of reach.

Despite spending a cold Midwest winter 2000 miles from home, then, Hassey was content, hungrily awaiting the 1985 season while making himself useful at



Hassey slides into 1985 with a sponsor

Looking to earn his Expert stripes.

the Warren dealership. The dream shattered on an Ohio road in January, though, when an errant driver made a sudden left turn in front of him. Hassey swerved to avoid the car, and rammed his van—Warren's team transporter—into a house. The van was totaled, and Hassey spent a few days in the hospital with minor injuries.

But the hospital stay wasn't the last of Hassey's problems; he still owed his bank about $5000 for the van, and his insurance wouldn't cover his loss. So, with monthly van payments yet to make, Hassey found himself in a no-win situation, with a competitive bike, but no way to get it to the races. Nonetheless, Hassey still plans to ride in '85. "I've thought about quitting many times," he said, "but it's too close to stop now. Somebody's finally come up and said, 'Hey, you're worth it.' "

Warren H-D owner, Bill Metzenroth, and mechanic Fred Perry told Hassey to stick with it; the bike would stay at his disposal, and he could use the dealer's pickup on race weekends. "We're going to have to pick and choose our races," Hassey said shortly before the season began. He'll compete at regional races, and nearby Camel Pro Series events only.

That schedule might fall short of Hassey's original plans for '85, but, amazingly enough, he has remained optimistic throughout his ordeal. "The main thing is that I got the ride," he said. "I'm just happy to have something fast and reliable." But now it's up to Hassey to go out and prove he's worth the sponsorship. And considering what he's gone through to get this far in his racing career, the odds for success are in his favor. His sentiments reflect those of practically every racer who has taken—and sometimes missed—a checkered flag. "There's always something," he said. In Hassey's case "something," as much as winning and losing, can be the toughest part of racing.

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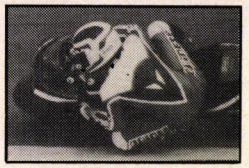

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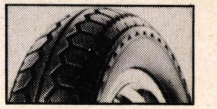

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LETTERS

The knave of clubs, hard head's return and cycle envy

TAKING A CLUB TO THE 55

In response to the "Risky Business" letter that was unfortunately included in the May 1985 issue: It's obvious the members of the 55 Club got their name by taking the average IQ of the 3245 misinformed followers.

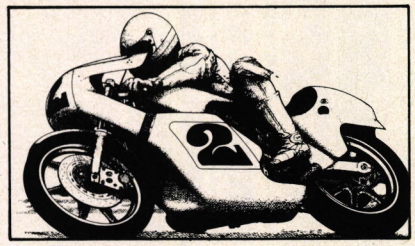
Michael J. Ledvina
Corona, California

PART YOUR HAIR WITH A CLUB

Good God, why should there be bikes as large as 500cc? Limit the world to 500s and those crazy Commie bikers will ride RD500LCs (rumored to be able to *exceed* the national speed limit!).

You didn't go far enough. Euthanasia for riders over 40. Motorcycles should be prohibited after dark, during storms, national holidays and times of personal crisis. It's amazing a group with more than 3000 signatures has to *write* to congressmen to express its desire to control millions of riders. I think it should have direct presidential veto power.

Go back to your grass shacks and hit



yourselves on the head with a club. The first time obviously didn't work.

Dan Juilfs
North East, Pennsylvania

OUR DAILY DREAD

I greatly enjoyed the letter from the 55 Club. We should all realize these sort of individuals are the same type who backed Hitler years ago.

I'm sure we could find a million reasons to make shoes illegal also. Perhaps these people should promote a new government agency that would send inspectors into every home to search for safety violations. Then we could implant TV monitors in all homes so these guardians could keep an eye on us.

All bikers and citizens should realize that assaults on our freedoms take many forms, and this current "safety" rage is merely an excuse to promote more government suppression into our daily lives.

Steve Strode
Sandy, Utah

THE NEW LOOK

Great! Just great! Just when we need it the least, we get someone (something?) like the "55 Club" to fill empty congressmen's heads with a bunch of fool notions. I think we have finally found those "motorcycle nuts" that everyone has been talking about all these years. Your suggestion was too kind. I suggest a straitjacket and a cement overcoat!

Brian E. Bilbo
Dallas, Texas

And perhaps an extra-small helmet?—ed.

MOTORCYCLISTS, UNITE

The 55 Club seems to want to trade *our* freedom to help create a clinically safe, antiseptic society. While claiming to be for motorcycle safety, they want to impose their will over something they don't understand. Don't they realize those same "black leather boots" are indeed safety devices? They also mention noise. They must be completely oblivious of the stringent EPA requirements.

I believe it is the duty of freedom-loving and patriotic Americans to oppose such hate groups and to stand up against those who oppose the freedom our forefathers fought and died for, or it will be gone forever.

Dean A. Davis
Watson, Illinois

THE BIG BORE

My wife's main interests are in art and antiques. I appreciate those, but I would much rather ride, work with or talk about motorcycles; I have two of them. My wife can't seem to understand the fascination of motorcycles.

Finally she decided that I must be looking upon my motorcycle as an extension of my penis. I have never heard of this. Could she be right?

Aaron M. Pascal
Sherman Oaks, California

THE RETURN OF ARMSTRONG

I read that bikers are afraid of cars on the highways. Isn't that frightening: 11- and 12-second hot-rodders, covered in helmets, dark visors and space suits, starting programs to make the bad car drivers like the frightened bikers.

Think about 5- to 10-year-olds darting in streets on bicycles night and day. No helmets, no reflective stripes, no lights. Who worries about them? Nobody! So stop sniveling, bikers. The government and police do love you.

Bikers not only turn on their lights on sunny days but conned the government into allowing flashing lights to help save lives. This increases accidents, of course, because lights attract attention and guide car drivers toward the bikes.

If bikers would ride a little uncovered, maybe they'd be recognized as humans. Have fun, you highway scorchers, writing letters about this one.

Ed Armstrong
Fox River Grove, Illinois

Like the women in "Easy Rider," eh, Armstrong?—ed.

All letters must include the writer's name and address. Letters will be edited for length. Due to the volume of mail received, we regret we are unable to give personal responses.

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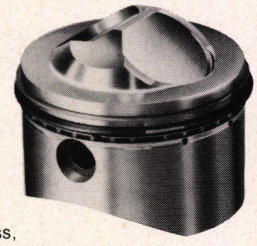

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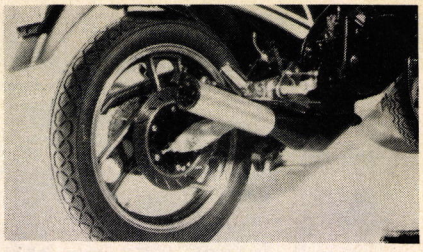

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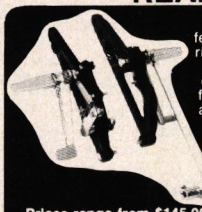

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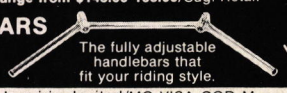

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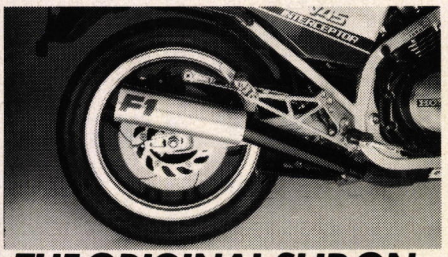

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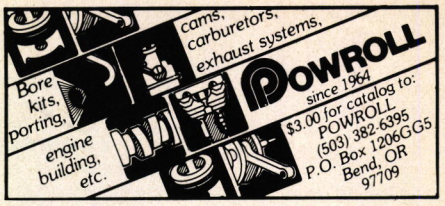

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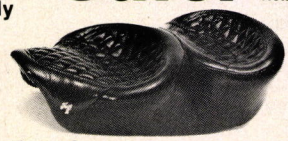

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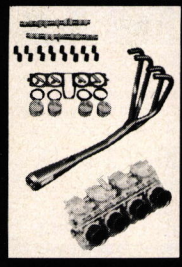

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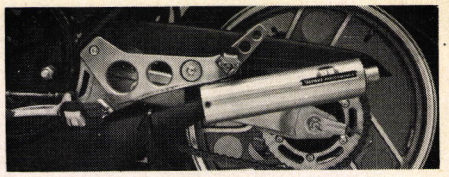

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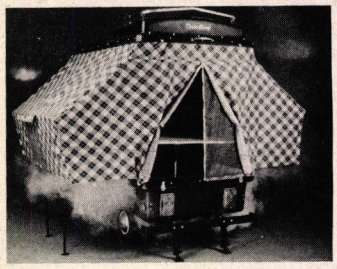

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